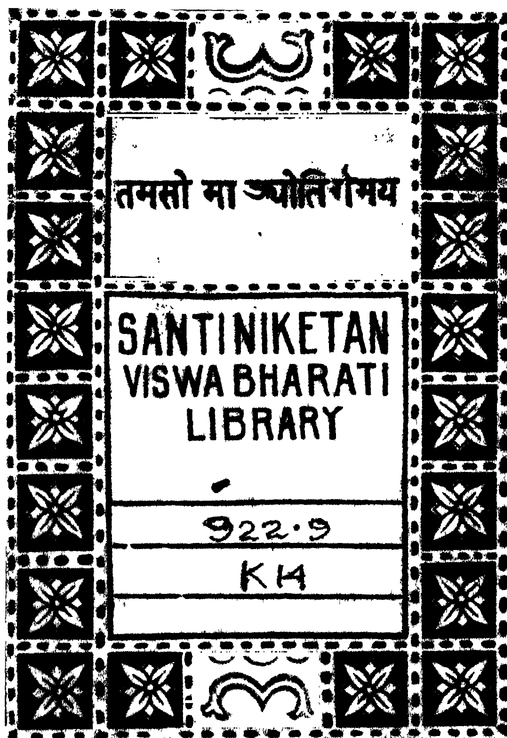

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LIFE OF GURU NANAK DEV

BY

KARTAR SINGH, M.A.

Author of

LIFE OF GURU GOBIND SINGH

PUBLISHED BY

JAIDEV SINGH JOGINDAR SINGH

BOOKSELLERS, AMRITSAR

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

1. *Life of Guru Gobind Singh* (English and Punjabi)
2. *Sikh Gurus and Untouchablity.*
3. *Guru Nanak's Response to the Call of Humanity.*
4. *Guru Arjan Dev, the Great Martyr.*
5. *Dukhie*, or Punjabee Rendering of Hugo's *Les Miserables.*

N. B. S. Kartar Singh has, at our request, agreed to write two more volumes on the rest of the Sikh Gurus and thus complete the Sikh history about the Gurus, in four volumes.

We also stock and publish other books on Sikh religion and Sikh history.

Publishers.

Desirest thou this game of Love to Play ?
Put thy head on thy palm,
With a heart resolute and calm,
Steadily follow me on this way.
This Path of Love if thou wouldst tread,
Be ready, O dear,
Sans wavering or fear,
In perfect joy to lay down thy head.

Guru Nanak

PREFACE

"I congratulate S. Kartar Singh on his fine production and pray that he or some other like him would produce equally fine volumes on the rest of the Gurus, which can be put into the hands of our own young men and all students of our history with a feeling of confidence and pride."

Thus wrote Bawa Harkishan Singh, M.A., Principal, Khalsa College, Gujranwala, while reviewing my earlier book, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*. Similar wishes and exhortations reached me from other kind friends. I decided to try at last and began with Guru Nanak. In two more volumes I intend to complete an account of the rest of the Gurus.

In full faith that Guru Nanak would bless my efforts and guide my pen I undertook this joyful duty. Have I succeeded in coming up to the desired standard in its performance? That is for the indulgent readers to judge.

Mine is not an attempt at a critical or scholarly study of Guru Nanak and his teachings. Only one who posed to know more than the Guru could think of such a study. As a humble disciple of the Guru that I strive to be, I could only try to explain and interpret him to the world. Such has been my endeavour in these pages.

Deep is the debt that I owe to Prof. Niranjan Singh, M.Sc., Ex-Professor of Chemistry, Khalsa College, Amritsar, whose precept and example have been chiefly instrumental in turning my thoughts in this channel. Prof. Teja Singh, M.A., was kind enough to read and revise most of the manuscript. I offer him my thanks for the trouble.

Islamabad, October 1937. *KARTAR SINGH*

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GURU NANAK DEV

CHAPTER I

THE TIMES AND THE PEOPLE—I

For a proper and intelligent understanding of the content and significance of Guru Nanak's teachings, and for a just appreciation of the audacious magnitude of the work which he undertook and performed, it is essential that we should have a knowledge of the times in which he lived, the conditions under which he worked, and the people among whom he lived and to whom his new message was addressed. We should know the moral and religious condition of the people, their economic and political status, and the mutual attitude of the rulers and the ruled.

Political conditions.

India at that time was mostly under the Muslim rule. Nominally, the Sultan of Delhi was the emperor of India. But actually, the country was divided up among several governors who were quite independent in their own provinces. Every one of them did with impunity what he considered to be right in accordance with his whims and pleasures or his own conception of morality, justice, and theological laws. Religion and *Jihad*, or exertion for the sake of religion, had come to be used as a ready excuse and thorough justification for all sorts of irreligious acts of torture, oppression, and tyranny.

To understand the characteristics of the Muslim rule it will be better to give a little account of the rise of Islam and its spread in India. To quote S. M. Latif, the religion of Islam was founded by the Prophet Muhammad, 'an Arab of the tribe of Quraish, who announced to his countrymen a divine revelation which he was commanded to promulgate with the sword......Muhammad propagated his religion with the sword. "The sword," said he, "is the key of Paradise and Hell. A drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail to the Faithful than two months of fasting and prayer." He who perished in holy war went straight to Heaven. In Paradise nymphs of fascinating beauty impatiently waited to greet his first approach. There the gallant martyrs lived for ever a life of happiness and bliss, free from sorrows and liable to no inconvenience from excess. They would possess thousands of beautiful slaves and get houses furnished with splendid gardens and with all the luxuries of life to live in. Such liberal promises of future happiness, added to an immediate prospect of riches and wealth, were enough to kindle the frenzy of the desert population of Arabia. Their martial spirit was roused and their sensual passions were inflamed.' They over-ran all neighbouring countries. Everywhere they satisfied to their hearts' content their hunger for wealth and riches and their highly inflamed sensual passions. Rape and rapine, fire and murder, marked their course. They were not slow to enjoy on earth the sensual pleasures which their exertions in the 'cause of God and Islam' made them entitled to in Paradise.

The Origin of Islam.

In India the Muhammadan inroads began about the middle of the seventh century. Her woes began from those days. Her wealth was carried off by foreign invaders. Thousands of her

Muslim Invasions of India.

[*] S. M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, pages 75-76.

sons and daughters were driven away to serve as slaves to the greed, lust, and passions of the conquerors. These campaigns against the 'Infidels' were no doubt looked upon as "holy wars" waged in the cause of God. Having been assured by their Prophet that 'a drop of blood shed in the cause of God was of more avail to the Faithful than two months of fasting and prayer', the frenzied Muslim invaders shed seas of blood as an act of Faith. 'Their fierce fanaticism, which regarded the destruction of non-Muslims as a service eminently pleasing to God, made them absolutely pitiless.'* After the Arabian conquerors came the Afghan plunderers. The raids of Mahmud of Ghazni spread a veritable ruin and horror in the land. Others followed him. Temples were destroyed, Hindus were murdered, and the survivors—men, women, and children,—were driven abroad and sold into slavery worse than death—all this 'for the glory of Islam'.

Cruelties of the Muslim Invaders and Rulers.

After centuries of such raids for plunder and devastation, the Muhammadan invaders resolved to establish their rule in this land of inexhaustible wealth and riches. The Muhammadan occupation of the land and its attendant conversion at the point of sword forced on the people a foreign rule and a foreign culture. The Panjab was the first to be conquered. The proselytizing zeal of the conquerors only increased with their conquests. Invaders came in quick succession. For a little over three centuries, this struggle for suzerainty was hot and furious. Half a dozen dynasties tried, in turn, to become the Sultans of Delhi. But all of them failed to establish anything like a settled government. Whatever sway they had was limited

* V. A. Smith, *India in the Mohammadan Period*, page 257,

to a small territory round about the capital. The rest of the country was in the hands of independent Nawabs who were a law unto themselves. Miserable indeed was the condition of the people during this period. The Hindus suffered the most. Below are given a few examples of the treatment of Hindus by Muhammadan conquerors of India culled from the writings of some Muhammadan historians.

(1) 'In *Kamilu-t-Twarikh* by Ibn Asir it is recorded that Shahab-ud-Din of Ghazni massacred thousands of the inhabitants of Ajmer and reserved the remainder for slavery. At Benares, too, the slaughter of the Hindus—men, women, and children—was immense.

(2) 'Hasan Nizam-i-Naishapuri states in his *Taj-ul-Ma'asir* that Qutb-ud-Din Aibak (A. D. 1194 to 1210) demolished the Hindu temples in Meerut and erected mosques on their sites. In the city of Koil, now called Aligarh, he converted the Hindu inhabitants to Islam by the sword, and beheaded all who adhered to their religion. In Kalinjar he destroyed one hundred and thirteen temples, built mosques on their sites, massacred over one lakh Hindus, and made slaves of about fifty thousand more.

(3) 'In the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-ul-Siraj it is stated that when Muhammad Bakhtyar Khilji conquered Bihar, he put to sword about one lakh Brahmans, and burnt a valuable library of ancient Sanskrit books.

(4) 'Abdulla Wassaf writes in his *Tazjiyat-ul-Amsar wa Tajriyat-ul-Asar* that when Ala-ul-Din Khilji (1295-1316) captured the city of Cambayat at the head of the gulf of Cambay, he killed the adult male Hindu inhabitants for the glory of Islam, set flowing seas of blood, sent the women of the country, with all their gold, silver, and jewels, to his own home, and made about twenty thousand maidens his private slaves.

'Ala-ud-Din once asked his qazi what was the Muhammadan law prescribed for Hindus. The qazi replied, " Hindus are like the earth ; if silver is demanded from them, they ought, with the greatest humility, to offer gold. And if a Muhammadan desire to spit into a Hindu's mouth, the Hindu should open it wide for the purpose. God created Hindus to be slaves of the Muhammadans. The Prophet hath ordained that, if the Hindus

do not accept Islam, they should be imprisoned, tortured, and finally put to death, and their property confiscated.'

(5) 'Amir Khusrau writes in his *Twarikh Alai* or *Khazain-ul-Futuh* that when the Emperor Feroz Shah Tughlak (A. D. 1351-88) took the city of Bhilsa in Bhopal, he destroyed all its Hindu temples, took away their idols, placed them in front of his fort, and had them daily bathed with the blood of a thousand Hindus.'*

'He caused the Hindus of Kohana, who had built a new temple, to be executed before the palace 'as a warning that no Zimmi (Scil. non-Muslim paying Jizya as the price of his life) could follow such wicked practices in a Musalman country.'†

After the Tughlaks came the Sayyids and the Lodis. All of them were fierce bigots. Their reigns, too, 'offer little but scenes of bloodshed, tyranny, and treachery.'†

Sikandar Lodi.

This brings us to the times in which Guru Nanak was born. Behlol Lodi was then the Sultan of Delhi (1450 to 1488 A. D.). By the time that the Guru grew to manhood, Sikander Lodi (A. D. 1488 to 1517) had ascended the throne. Under him the state assumed a thoroughly "theocratic character and officially imposed Islam on the Hindus."‡ "He was firmly attached to the Mahomedan religion and made a point of destroying all Hindu temples. To a holy man who

* Summarised from Macauliffe's *Sikh Religion*, Vol. I, Introduction.

† V. A. Smith, *India in the Mohammadan Period*, page 250.

‡ Ishwari Prasad, *History of Medieval India*, page 481. Read also what Elphinstone writes in this connection :—

'He was one of the few bigots who have sat on the throne of India. He destroyed the temples in towns and forts that he took from Hindus, and he forbade the people performing pilgrimages, and bathing on certain festivals at places on the sacred streams within his own dominions. On one occasion he carried his zeal to cruelty and injustice ; for a Bramin having been active in propagating the doctrine that "all religions, if sincerely practised, were equally acceptable to God," he summoned him to defend this opinion, in his presence, against twelve Mahometan divines ; and on his refusing to renounce his tolerant maxims, puthim to death.' (Elphinstone, *The History of India*, page 410.)

said that to interfere with the religion of the subjects was not proper for a king, Sikandar, drawing his sword said, "Wretch! do you maintain the propriety of the Hindu religion?" He imprisoned Ahmad Khan, the Governor of Lucknow, because he had, viewing the moral practices of Hindus, ceased to persecute them. A Brahman, whose name was Boodhan, being upbraided by some Mahomedans on account of his faith, maintained that all religions, if sincerely practised, were equally acceptable to God. Sikandar summoned him to defend his opinion, in his presence, against over a dozen Mahomaden divines. After many arguments, the learned men were of opinion that unless the infidel, who had maintained the Hindu worship to be equally acceptable to God as that of the True Faith, renounced his error and adopted the Mahomedan religion, he ought to suffer death. The Hindu refused to apostatize and was accordingly executed, while the Mussalman doctors were rewarded with gifts.'*

We have to remember that it was during the reign of this 'ferocious bigot', as Smith calls him, that Guru Nanak began his crusade against the tyranny of irresponsible autocrats and the corrupt practices of Islam and Hinduism, and declared from the housetops that all human beings were the sons of the same Father and hence equal in all respects, 'in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes.'

Forcible Conversion the Official Policy.

It has been seen, on the testimony of a Muslim writer, that it was religious fanaticism as well as a desire for plunder and sensual satisfaction that had prompted the Muslims to invade India. When established here, their officially avowed policy was the propagation of Islam. For the achievement of this 'holy' object all ways

* Summarised from Ishwari Prasad's book referred to above.

and means, however unholy, were deemed proper and justified. Persecution, bribery, economic and political disabilities, and all other conceivable means were employed to force the Hindus to forsake their religion. In the theory of Muslim State the infidels had no place. God was the supreme Lord. The Muhammadan king was His Deputy on earth. As such, it was his duty to spread as far as lay in his power the religion of God as proclaimed by the Prophet. All other religions were false and hence not worthy to live. No dissent from Islam was to be tolerated. The faithful was commanded to convert or kill the infidels wherever they were found.* They had no right to exist in a Muslim state. If, however, their conversion or extinction was not possible or not practicable, then they could be permitted to live as a necessary evil ; but, as the price of their life thus spared, they had to pay *Jizia* and behave with humility and reverence becoming a subject race.†

Moral Degradation.

This policy, which had "divine" sanction behind it, gave free reins to the lust, greed, and passions of all who had any power over the people. The lowest vied with the highest in showing their fanatic zeal for Islam ; for such exer-

* "But when the sacred months are elapsed, then shed the blood of the pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, and besiege them and lie in wait for them at every place. But if they turn and keep up the prayer and pay the stated alms, then let them alone on their path. And if any one of the pagans ask thee for refuge, then give him refuge till he hears God's word." (*Holy Quran*, IX 5, 6)

"Say to the infidels that if they desist from their unbelief, what is now past shall be forgiven them. But if they return to it—then fight against them till strife be at an end and the religion be entirely God's."

(*Holy Quran*, VIII, 38, 39)

† " With regard to the idolators of a non-Arabic country, Shafi maintains that destruction is incurred by them also ; but other learned doctors agree that it is lawful to reduce them to slavery, thus allowing them, as it were, a respite during which it may please God to direct them into the right path, but making, at the same time, their persons and substance subservient to the cause of Islam."

(Hughes *Encyclo. Islam* quoted by Sir J. N. Sarkar)

tion was not only fruitful of immediate gratification, but also promised lasting pleasures in Paradise. We can well imagine the condition of the Hindu *zimmies*, *i.e.* those who paid *Jizia* as the price of their life. As S. M. Latif says, 'Great jealousy and hatred existed in those days between the Hindus and the Mahomedans, and the whole non-Musalman population was subject to persecution by the Mahomedan rulers."* The result was that crime, corruption, and sin prevailed all round. Both the rulers and the ruled, the oppressors and the oppressed, were deep down in moral degradation.

Effects of Mass conversions on Islam.

This moral degradation, born of power freely exercised and misapplied, affected also the religious belief and practice of the victors. The impact of Hinduism on Islam was also not without its effects. Wholesale conversions of the lower ranks of the Hindu society necessitated a modification of the uncompromising monotheism of Islam. The new converts could not be made to give up entirely their gods and deities who had become too closely interwoven with the thoughts and habits of the people. They were unable to conceive of a God who could be approached only through the Arabian Prophet ; specially as they were not given an idol, picture, or any other likeness to aid their visualization of the Prophet. Such abstract conceptions, unaided by visible representation, were too much for them. So the Muslim divines had to provide for the needs of the new converts. The result was that numerous intercessors were created, and were held up for homage in opposition to the Hindu gods and goddesses. There were other reactions also. "Nor did the proud distinctions of caste and the reverence shown to the Brahmans fail to attract the notice and admiration of the barbarous victors. Shaikhs and Saiyids had an innate holiness assigned to them, and Mughals and Pathans

* *History of the Punjab*, page 240.

copied the exclusiveness of the Rajputs. New superstitions also emulated old credulity. 'Pirs' and 'Shahids', Saints and Martyrs, equalled Krishna and Bhairon in the number of their miracles, and the Muhammadans almost forgot the unity of God in the multitude of intercessors whose aid they implored."* By and by, the Muslim divines, Shaikhs, Sayyids, Mullas, and Faqirs, came to have the same sway over the superstitious minds of the Indian Muhammadans as the Brahmins, Pandits, and Sadhus, had over those of the Hindus. Magic, spells, and penances, in imitation of the Hindu practices, were freely employed to maintain and strengthen this hold on the credulous Muslim masses. Unity of God came to be at best a half-forgotten ideal. The Mullas and their wiles and superstitions held the field. The Muhammadan masses understood little of the real teachings of the Arabian Prophet. The Mullas and Maulvis, who should have enlightened the people in this matter, only tried to keep their hold on them by diverting their attention to the non-essentials. Hence, with most of the Muhammadans, as with their Hindu neighbours, religion had come to be a matter of forms, ceremonies, and observances. The place of Hindu idols had been taken by tombs of Pirs, Faqirs, and Shahids, which came to be regarded as places of pilgrimage and worship. The ignorant Muhammadan masses, under the patronage of Mullas and Faqirs, visited the tombs on special days with suitable offerings, bowed, knelt, and prostrated before them, and offered prayers for all sorts of worldly gifts and benefits.

Thus, with the Muhammadans, religion had come to mean but little more than an injunction for the persecution of the Hindus, a sanction for all sorts of licentiousness, vice, and corruption; and a system requiring the performance of meaningless, very often un-Islamic, rites and ceremonies. It no longer inspired its votaries to a life of devotion, morality, self-sacrifice, and human kindliness.

* Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, page 33.

CHAPTER II

THE TIMES AND THE PEOPLE—II

Caste System in Hinduism.

The Hindus have been preeminently a religious people. India has been the birth place of many religions and many systems of religious philosophy. Even at the time when other peoples were immersed in savage ignorance, the Hindus in India could boast of a civilization of a very high standard. But unfortunately, the Hindu society took a wrong turning in quite early days. A queer 'division of labour' was devised by its scholars who were called Brahmins. To ensure perfect leisure for themselves, they invented the *Varnashram Dharma*, or the caste-system. The risky and arduous tasks of fighting the enemies and producing and providing the necessities and comforts of life were entrusted to others. The priests took upon themselves the duty of offering prayers and performing religious rites and ceremonies on behalf of the combatants, the tillers of soil, the artisans, and the menials. The leisure thus obtained was utilized by these clever people for devising complicated and impressive ceremonials which could not be performed but by themselves. Gradually they came to be the custodians and dispensers of religion and religious knowledge. The common people understood little of the sacred books, portions of which were read out to them by the priests on special occasions. In fact, Brahmins alone could study the scriptures. They would not instruct others. The worst aspect of the caste system was that a large part of the people were denied the solace of religion and prayer or a direct approach to God and gods. God was not for them. Religion was not their concern.

They were not permitted even to hear the sacred hymns or approach the idols and temples. Savage and severe were the punishments prescribed for such of these wretched people as transgressed the law. They had to rest content with serving the higher classes. Their touch or shadow polluted the 'Twice-born' as the higher classes called themselves. Such was the miserable lot of the unfortunate Sudras. That of Vaisyas was only a little better. They, too, had to toil and moil for others. They, too, could not study the sacred books. Brahmins did that work for them. Hence the toilers had to support the Brahmin scholars. Thus the caste-system came to be a source of a good deal of evil and misery, and an excuse for manifold tyranny.

Religion — a Mere Farce.

By the time of Guru Nanak the Hindu Religion was at its lowest ebb. Its spirit was well-nigh dead, and in its place there had gradually sprung up a Brahmanical legalism—a religion of forms and ceremonials devoid of any sense or meaning. Religion had been reduced to a mockery. It "was confined to peculiar ways of bathing and painting the forehead and other such mechanical observances. The worship of idols wherever they were permitted to exist, pilgrimages to Ganges and other sacred places wherever they were allowed, the observance of certain ceremonies like the marital and funeral rites, the obedience to the mandates of the Brahmans and lavishing charitable gifts upon them constituted almost the whole of Hinduism as it was then current among the masses."*

The Brahmins' Snares and Clever Tricks.

The Brahmins had, as stated above, gradually elevated themselves into an ecclesiastical hierarchy who were the custodians of law and religion. They considered themselves to be a specially favoured, a privileged class. They had constituted themselves not only the custodians

* Sir G. C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, page 5.

of religion but also as dispensers of religion and religious knowledge. They alone could study the sacred books. The people in their estimation were of a lower intellectual and religious order, devoid of the necessary capacity for understanding the scriptures. But the Brahmins, too, had come to be completely devoid of a real spirit of religion. Some of them still had the scriptures by heart. But they neither understood nor practised the teachings contained in the sacred texts which they mechanically repeated in hopes of salvation. Very often, in their practical life they were just the opposite of what the scriptures required them to be. They had fallen, both morally and spiritually. Still they not only claimed to be the advisers to the multitudes of Hindu gods regarding the gifts to be bestowed on the mortals or the evils to be averted from their heads, but also pretended to be a mysterious means of goods traffic between this world and the next. In that capacity they undertook to transport food, clothing, utensils, etc. given them for their own use, to the deceased relatives, ancestors, or gods of the pious, ignorant, and superstitious people. The Brahmin thus ate sumptuous dinners, enjoyed all sorts of material gifts and pleasures, and assured his dupes that everything had been passed on to the desired persons in the other world. Of course, the devotee had to pay adequate conveyance charges."*

Effects of this System.

This state of affairs, which had gradually come about, was productive of at last three noticeable results, a religious starvation and stagnation on the part of the great mass of people; the creation of a haughty, self-righteous, and domineering ecclesiastical heirarchy; and the splitting up of the Hindu society into many sections which were very often mutually hostile and jealous. Thus religion, instead of being a unifying principle and a source of moral and spiritual

* *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, by the writer.

elevation, had come to be the cause of mental and spiritual slavery, moral degeneration, and the disruption of the Hindu society.

Treachery of Natural Leaders.

If the Brahmins monopolized religious knowledge and thus brought about religious and moral degeneration of the Hindu society, the part that the warrior class—the Kashattriyas—played after the Muhammadan occupation of the land was quite as baneful. One by one, they had found themselves no match for the foreign invaders. Making a virtue of necessity, they had thrown in their lot with the Muhammadan rulers. Proud of their high descent, they despised the common people. They had no sympathy with the masses. Rather, they joined hands with the Muhammadan rulers in their exploitation and oppression of the Hindu populace. Mutually jealous and disunited, they had not been able to offer a united front to the invaders and had thus allowed the land to be conquered and occupied. Their mutual jealousy made them rejoice over the fall and humiliation of each other at the hands of the Muhammadan rulers. This state of affairs made them sink still further. They grew weak and degraded, physically, morally, and spiritually. Thoughts of liberty and independence never disturbed them. They were content to bear the yoke because in that way alone they could enjoy their lands and positions. They had come to be pillars of the tyrannical rule of the Muslims and willing agents of oppression and prosecution.

All the same, the masses were bitterly against the galling yoke of tyranny. But their so-called natural leaders, who should have liberated them, had joined hands with the oppressors. We can imagine how hard it must have gone with the people. They toiled and moiled all their lives, but were ill fed and ill treated. Others, those in power, snatched

away a major portion of their hard earned substance and left them poor, unhappy, and starving. For their being engaged in useful professions they were despised and looked down upon.

Thus the Brahmins and the Kashattriyas had ceased to do their respective duty of instructing and defending the people. The onslaught of the Muhammadans had unnerved them. The severe proselytizing campaign started and steadily maintained by the Muhammadans spread a confusion and consternation among the Hindu ranks. "The instinct of self-preservation, in any form, and at any sacrifice, became supreme and all-absorbing. The priests, the hereditary guardians of Hinduism, lazy and lifeless like all hereditary incumbents of high positions, could not invite all Hindus together and by one united action hurl back the waves of invasion. Not being able to play the part of Charles Martel or Peter the Hermit and fight in the open field, they shut themselves up in the impregnable fortress of caste. All who were privileged were taken in, the rest were allowed to fight their own battle as best as they could. The result was that whereas the majority of the twice-born Hindus were saved, the majority of others fell an easy prey to the proselytizing zeal of Islam."* Thus the vicious circle went on. The conversions tightened the caste restrictions and a tightening of the caste restrictions led to further conversions. And so on.

On the other hand, the impact of Islam on Hinduism was producing noticeable effects. "The influence of a new people, who equalled or surpassed Kashattriyas in valour, who despised the sanctity of Brahmans, and who authoritatively proclaimed the unity of God and His abhorrence of images, began gradually to operate on the minds of the multitudes of India and recalled even the learned to the simple tenets of the

* Sir G. C. Narang.

Vedas, which Shankar Acharj had disregarded. The operation was necessarily slow, for the imposing system of powers and emanations had been adapted with much industry to the local or peculiar divinities of tribes and races, and in the lapse of ages, the legislation of Manu had become closely interwoven with the thoughts and habits of the people."* Still the leaven was cast. The popular belief became unsettled. People's confidence was shaken. They could no longer feel contented with what the Brahmins had to tell them of God and gods.

Several attempts were made by gifted Hindu scholars and saints to bring about order in this ever-growing chaos :—

Unfruitful Attempts for Reforms.

" Ramanand and Gorakh had preached religious equality, and Chaitan had repeated that faith levelled caste. Kabir had denounced images, and appealed to the people in their own tongue, and Valabh had taught that effectual devotion was compatible with the ordinary duties of the world. But these good and able men appear to have been so impressed with the nothingness of this life, that they deemed the amelioration of man's social condition to be unworthy of a thought. They aimed chiefly at emancipation from priestcraft, or from the grossness of idolatry and polytheism. They formed pious associations of contented Quietists, or they gave themselves up to the contemplation of futurity in the hope of approaching bliss, rather than called upon their fellow creatures to throw aside every social as well as religious trammel, and to arise a new people freed from the debasing corruption of ages. They perfected forms of dissent rather than planted the germs of nations, and their *sects* remain to this day as they left them." †

* Cunningham, page 32.
† *Ibid*. page 38.

Plight of the Panjabees.

Such were the times. The country was mostly under the Muslim rule. With but a few exceptions the rulers were ferocious bigots and savage tyrants. Their officials were corrupt and unscrupulous. There was little of justice for the weak and the poor, and next to none for the Hindus. Islam was being propagated by a free use of the sword, persecution, persuasion, and every other means, fair or foul. Hindu temples were being demolished and replaced by mosques; erection of new ones was prohibited, and religious observances and pilgrimages were banned. The state of things in the Panjab was the worst. "This province was the first to be conquered. It lay between two powerful Mohammadan capitals, Delhi and Cabul. The Moslem Government was most thoroughly established there. The wave of proselytism had spread there with an overwhelming force, and the Panjab contained the largest number of converts to Islam. All vestige of Hindu greatness had been obliterated.... Those who had escaped conversion had lost almost all that lends dignity and grace to life and distinguishes religion from superstition and cant."* Those who did not relish such a life of dishonour and servility, and had a religious bent of mind, 'had sought safety from persecution and death in the loneliness of the desert or the retirement of the forest, and lived single-minded investigators of Truth.'†

Manifold Conflicts.

Thus, with regard to political status and social and religious rights, the Hindus were in a very sorry predicament. Their relations with their powerful Muhammadan neighbours were generally not at all happy. In the words of Latif, 'great jealousy and hatred existed in those times between the Hindus and the Muhammadans'. Among

* Dr. Sir G. C. Narang.
† Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion.*' Vol 1, Intr. p. xli.

themselves, too, the Hindus were far from being united or at peace. Apart from the political rivalry of those who had managed to retain power and position at the huge sacrifice of honour and independence, there was the accursed system of castes, dividing the people into mutually hostile groupsand condemning a large section of the people to a most wretched and despicable condition. It was no wonder, then, that the majority of the lower classes found it far better to join the ranks of the oppressors rather than be spurned by the high-born Hindus and persecuted by the powerful Muhammadans. In fact, the new converts to Islam were generally fiercer bigots and more fiery fanatics than the rest. The natural leaders of the Hindus had allied themselves with the Muhammadan tyrants and sucked the people's blood. The priests, who were the custodians and dispensers of religion and religious knowledge, had become base and corrupt, and had reduced religion to a mockery, a matter of forms and symbols lacking real life and spirit. There was a deep degradation all round. The masses were sunk low in vice, ignorance, and superstition and were victims of tyranny and oppression in several forms. The impact of Islam and Hinduism on each other had unsettled the popular belief of both the Hindus and the Muhammadans. The Mullas or Muhammadan divines were as devoid of true religion as the Hindu priestswere. The people were, therefore, dissatisfied with the existing religions.

A few attempts made to introduce reforms had met with but partial and limited success. Moreover, no religious reformer had appeared in the Panjab where, as already stated, the state of things was the darkest and the need for reforms was the greatest.

The Promise and the Prophecy.

There has been a general belief among all peoples, since the earliest times, that great leaders and teachers, founders of new systems, are born in times of great social and political depression and religious confusion. Indeed, all

great religions of the world had their birth in the darkest of such ugly times. To the Indian people Lord Krishna had proclaimed long ago :—

> "Whenever there is decay of righteousness, O Bharta, and there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I myself come forth.
>
> For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the sake of firmly estsblishing righteousness, I am born from age to age."

There was thus a tradition, which had, with the steadily worsening state of things, developed into a firm conviction, that there soon would come a Deliverer who would deliver the wretched people out of the hands of their enemies, and bring the oppressors to grief and ruin. It was also believed that the time had come for the fulfilment of the prophecy recorded in the *Bhawikht Puran* and for the promise held forth in the Gita being made good.

Their Fulfilment.

The tradition and the belief turned out to be true. In the Panjab itself, where the darkness was the thickest, was born the one who was to be an apostle of freedom and equality in this land of social, religious, and political tyranny, a prophet of peace and good will in a land full of hatred and discord, who was to supply the steel with which the evil-doers had to be destroyed, to sow the seed of a nation of Warrior-saints who were to snatch the sword from the tyrants' hands, to preach a doctrine which could cement, with unbreakable bonds of love, all sections of the Indian people, and to found the Holy Fellowship where the lowest was to be equal with the highest, 'in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes.' That great personality was Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion and the creator of the Sikh nation.

CHAPTER III

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Talwandi and Rai Bular.

Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh nation, was born at Talwandi in the present district of Shekhupura on the third day of the light half of Baisakh in Samvat year 1526, corresponding to the fifteenth day of April 1469 A. D.* Talwandi is now called Nankana Sahib in honour of the great world-teacher to whom it had the honour to give birth. It was then a small village situated in the midst of a dense forest and waste land. Rai Bhoe, a Rajput of Bhatti Clan and a retainer of the ruler of Delhi, had been its founder and proprietor. He had owned about a dozen villages around Talwandi. After his death his son, Rai Bular, had succeeded him. Both Rai Bular and his father were new converts to Islam. They had accepted the religion of the rulers under the effect of force or the influence of some other powerful persuasion. But unlike most converts, they were neither fanatics nor bigots. Rai Bhoe was a warrior and had made himself the master of a great tract of fertile land. People of both persuasions were equally treated by him. In consequence, he had come to be loved and honoured by all. His son, Rai Bular, was of a quiet, religious temperament. He loved the society of Sadhus and faqirs. He had none of the fire of hatred that was then raging in the breasts of the Indian followers of the Arabian Prophet. This was no doubt

*The birth anniversary of the Guru is nowadays celebrated on the full-moon day of Kartick. For a discussion of the question whether the Guru was born in Baisakh or Kartick please turn to Appendix A.

partly due to his being out of touch with the outside Muhammadan world where bigotry was making a hell of this land. Talwandi was away from the tumults and excitements, brutality and fanaticism, of the outer world. But there was also a deeper source of his toleration for his erstwhile coreligionist. As a truly religious man and not a fanatic, Rai Bular was inspired with a sympathy for the downtrodden persecuted race. We shall find how this human touch in his nature made him discern, long before many others did, the true light in the Divine Child who was born in his village.

The Birth.

Guru Nanak's father, Mehta Kalian Das, more popularly known as Mehta Kalu, was the Agent and Chief Accountant of Rai Bular. Thus he was materially quite well off. He belonged to the Bedi section of Kashattriya caste. Because of his position and personality he commanded the respect of the whole *tappa* or district.* Rai Bular had full confidence in him. A son and the rain are, in India, always regarded as welcome gifts of God. The birth of a son, especially that of a first one, is an occasion of great rejoicings. But the joy that filled the heart of Mehta Kalu was unusually great. The attendant nurse had told him that she had never seen a birth or a babe like this before. To her simple, unsophisticated mind the birth chamber had appeared surcharged with something supernatural. She had heard gay, invisible voices hailing the baby's advent into the world of mortals. The baby itself had looked quite different from all she had seen before. It had smiled like a grown-up wise man, instead of crying like a new-born, helpless babe. There had been seen a halo round his head. We can imagine the delight and happiness which must have filled the heart of Mehta Kalu when he heard these details from the lips of the simple nurse.

* 'Nanak's father was a respectable man, and was treated by the village people as their head.' Latif, page 241.

The Astrologer Casts the Horoscope.

Like all Hindus, the happy father sent for the family astrologer, Hardial, to draw up the baby's horoscope. When Hardial heard what the nurse had to say, he is said to have been filled with a mysterious awe and wonder. Before consulting his books and determining the stars under which the baby had been born, he wanted to have a look at it. It was an unusual request, but Hardial's importunities prevailed. The astrologer, who had seen hundreds of babies in his life, discerned in this one a light that was to fill all lands and to guide all people to the Eternal Abode of the Supreme Lord ; a peace that was to soothe the ruffled breasts of a whole world ; a strange, sober, solemn joy that was to lighten the burden of many a weary, forlorn, oppressed heart, a spiritual grandeur that was to elevate unto the bosom of the Lord the restless, wandering, world-beaten spirits of his fellowmen ; an all-embracing love that was to knit all—Hindus, Muslims, and the rest—into a Holy Fellowship of Soldiers of God and Brothers of Mankind ; and a compassion that was to ameliorate the wretched condition of human beings oppressed and repressed by their powerful fellowmen. The astrologer bowed before the singular infant. He congratulated Mehta Kalu saying, " Fortunate indeed art thou, O Mehta, to have such a one as thy son. He will be a unique king, holding sway over vast dominions, and adored by all sections of humanity. His fame and name will spread far beyond the frontiers of India. Though I shall not live long enough to witness his conquest of the world, yet I am happy to have seen him. I am blest."

Rejoicings All-Round.

Sweet as honey were these words to Mehta Kalu and his wife, Mata Tripta. Kalu was a man of the world. He rejoiced to think that his only son would acquire fame, wealth, and rule. In accordance with the practice which

somewhat still prevaills in this land, the infant was named Nanak after his elder sister, Bebe Nanki.* How glad must she have been ! Brothers named after them are specially dear to Indian sisters. Nanak was Bebe Nanki's own 'special' brother. Thus, apparently quite by accident, but probably by a divine pre-ordination, a lasting bond was established between the brother and sister. He shared her name. We shall see that he came to own her very soul. She alone of all his family discerned, at a very early time, the Eternal light that shone in the countenance of her divine brother.

All who beheld this infant felt drawn towards him. Resting in his cradle, or lying in the loving arms of his kith and kin, the infant would ever smile such a beaming smile that all who saw him felt an unknown joy stealing into their hearts and elating their souls. He never cried but ever smiled and played. When he was able to walk, the same jubilance marked him wherever he went. Soon, another trait of his personality became visible. Whenever a beggar, a needy man, or a faqir, called at the door, he would run in, take hold of whatever article of food or clothing he could get at, and, with a beaming, compassionate face, deliver it into the hands of the mendicant. Little did his father relish such unbounded charity ; but what could he do ?

Early Signs of Coming Things.

At the early, unripe age of five, he began to talk of divine things. When he was among his playmates, he would, at times, seat them all around himself and bid them repeat after him the name of the Formless Lord. At other times, he would run and jump, frisk and gambol, at the head of his little band. When all alone, he would sometimes sit for hours with half-shut eyes. Those who beheld him thus

* *Nanke* is a Panjabee word meaning the home of the maternal grandfather, or *nana*. A child born at the *nanke* home is usually called Nanak, if male, and Nanki, if female.

occupied were struck at the radiance and glory that emanated from his calm, rosy countenance. But his father liked not these other-worldly signs in his only son. He wanted to see him become a great man of the world.

As stated already, Talwandi was secluded from the outside Muhammadan world. Its founder had, instead of molesting and persecuting the Hindus, like his coreligionists of other places, lived at peace with his neighbours. Hindu sadhus found hospitable shelter in the forests round about Talwandi. After Rai Bhoe, his son, Rai Bular, had followed in the footsteps of his father. On that account, bands of sadhus quite often visited the locality. The child Guru Nanak took great pleasure in visiting them. He would sit by them for hours. He would offer them what article of food he could lay his hands on at home. What were his thoughts as he sat there looking at those whom he was destined to teach a truer renunciation than a mere quitting of the family and living on the labours of others ? Did any of those seekers after Truth and self-realization, those wandering Sadhus, evèr have a vision of what the child before them was to be one day ?

Parents Perturbed.

Mehta Kalu was troubled sorely over the strange ways of Guru Nanak. In spite of the love-inspired efforts of Mata Tripta, the Mehta could not but detect his son's gifts to beggars and sadhus. How could a man whose heart was after storing wealth and riches in this world relish such 'wasteful' conduct of his son ? He rebuked the child. The latter promised to obey his father. But what could he do ? Charity, open-handed charity, was in his grain. The Divine urge would not let him be what his father would make of him. His soul was in constant communion with the Supreme Soul. He could not resist these early calls to a life that was

to be his in times to come. The Mehta reproached the astrologer for having predicted a great and glorious future for such an 'idler and spendthrift'. "What a joke," he would say, "you said he would be a great ruler over men and lands ; he would win untold wealth and honour for himself and his people. Yet he has begun the other way. He seems bent upon throwing away what little I have honestly gathered. Was it a joke or an error on your part ?" The astrologer would not give in. How could he let it be supposed that his science, on which he depended for his sustenance, was false, or that he was not well versed in it ? "Have patience," he would say, "I still hold that Nanak is to be even greater than rulers of men and lands. Judge him not too hastily, nor measure him with your own standards."

The Pandha's Strange Pupil.

At last the fond father, intent on moulding his son after his own heart, decided to send the 'refractory' child to school. "That," thought he, "will at least keep him away from home for the day-time and thus stop his wasteful conduct. He'll also have no time to go about hunting after sadhus and faqirs and imbibe their ways. Perhaps, thus weaned from such distractions, he may learn the three R's and qualify himself for stepping into my shoes when I am gone."

Like a dutiful son that he was, Guru Nanak readily agreed to do as bidden. On an 'auspicious' day Mehta Kalu took his son, the would-be world-teacher to a *Pandha*, a Brahmin schoolmaster, "Take good care of him," said he to the *Pandha*, "for he is rather troublesome !" The *Pandha*, however, discovered no such trait in his new pupil. He found him quick to learn and ready to obey. The *Pandha* felt not a little puzzled over what appeared to him either an unheard of precocity in the child or a most wonderful miracle. All his life he had seen no such pupil. The child learnt to

write in an amazingly short time. But a great wonder was still in store for the schoolmaster. One day Guru Nanak sat a little apart, apparently engrossed in writing on the *Patti*, or the wooden tablet. The schoolmaster watched him with interest. He had already discovered that this new pupil of his was no ordinary child. He had seen him at play leading the whole band. He had often watched him close his eyes and sit for hours as if in ecstasy. He was sure it was not sleep. He had looked into the mysterious eyes of his strange coach. Sometimes they would shine with unbounded mirth; at others they seemed to be deep unfathomable wells at the bottom of which was seen reflected all the agony that afflicted the world. His pupils had also told him, "Whenever you leave the school room for a while, Nanak gathers us round him and makes us all repeat after him the name of the Omnipotent, Formless Lord. At such times, his face always appears to be radiant with an unearthly light." The teacher had heard, seen, and felt, all this; so it was with a strange, heart-quivering expectation that he watched Guru Nanak as he sat apart, calm and concentrated, writing on the *Patti* and humming to himself a soft, low tune as he wrote. At last, the watchful eyes of the schoolmaster discovered that Guru Nanak had laid aside his pen and was looking at his work in mute joy and admiration. Later, when he was in his full glory as a world-teacher, Guru Nanak revealed the secret of his matchless compositions. It was not he that wrote or composed. He was simply an amanuensis of the Supreme Lord, an organ wherewith the Word of God was proclaimed to humanity. Here was a sample, the first one, of such composition. The great amanuensis sat watching his work in joy and wonder. The schoolmaster thought that his pupil, having finished his writing, would come up to him and show it. But Guru Nanak did not move. The *Pandha*

waited for him till he could wait no longer. A strange urge was in his heart. The like of it he had never felt before. He rose, went up to where his strange pupil sat, and said, " Nanak, thou hast been writing something. I should like to see it."

The Teacher Taught.

Guru Nanak rose at the bidding of the schoolmaster and gave the *Patti* into his hands. Great indeed was the amazement of the Pandha. He found that the writing on the *Patti* was not what he had expected, or what his pupils generally wrote at that stage of their educational career. Not disconnected, independent words and figures, but sentences and paragraphs. He began to read. He bowed again and again as he read. It was an acrostic on the alphabet. But what an acrostic it was to be written by a child! It was a hearty discourse on God, man, and the universe. It contained an essence of the message of hope, joy, and deliverance which the Guru had to proclaim to the suffering, despairing, misguided humanity; a burden of the Divine Song by which Guru Nanak had, later, to wean people from their soul-killing habits and inclinations, to lift them up to the level of gods, to the feet of the Lord. A few lines of the acrostic are given below :—

" Why art thou misled, O fool? Why cherish so tall conceit of thy talents vain?
Then alone canst thou a learned man be deemed,
When a good account of thy life to the Lord thou canst give.
Remember that He, who created the universe, is the Supreme Lord of all.
They alone can achieve the true object of their coming into the world
Who, fixing their hearts and minds on Him, keep always engaged in the service of God in all ....
Praise the All-pervading, Boundless Lord alone.
True merit and reward they alone shall win
Who meekly serve, who in their lives realize and practise truth.

He alone can be deemed a scholar true
Who, in his life, hath realized the love and knowledge of God.
If the same Lord pervading in all he could see,
How then could man a proud egotist be ?
The servant who exerteth himself in service, and love,
Who is ever busy in executing the commands of the Guru,
And who is equally poised amid good and evil, in grief and joy,
Such a one shall attain a union with the Lord.
Why die of grief and anxious care, O mortal fool ?
Ever doth He give to all what He hath ordained.
Why all this bustle for show and deceit, my friend ?
In a while or two wilt hence thou go ; this show will end.
Why gamble thy life thus idly away ?
Hie to the Lord ; at His feet thy self thou lay.
Calm, cool, and happy are they whose souls to His feet are linked;
Those whose souls are thus attached are truly saved,
And through favour Divine, true happiness they get.
He in whose heart the Supreme Lord doth ever abide,
Every moment His praises doth he sing ;
The Creator blendeth such a one with Himself
And he entereth not the cycle of birth and death again......
The Creator of all the worlds pervadeth everywhere.
What is doubt and what is illusion ?
Whatever pleaseth Him is good.
Impute no blame to others, my soul,
On thy *Karma* the blame doth lie in whole.
As did I sow so now I reap.
I'd blame none else for this my grief.
No other Giver is there but He
Who has created all things and sustains them all,
Meditate on God's name, get absorbed in Him ;
Day and night strive for the merit that His Name will give.*

The *Pandha* had heard from Mehta Kalu and his own pupils of the strange ways of his pupil. He had also learnt about the astrologer's prophecy about him. The writing on the wooden tablet confirmed the belief that was then germinating in several pious hearts—namely that Mehta Kalu's son was destined to be the promised Deliverer. But the

* Guru Nanak, *Asa Patti.*

Pandha, like a worldly man of learning, would not believe without a further test. "This is all right," said he to his pupil, "But what I have to teach is also essential. You are a Khatri's son. You should also learn accountancy, so that, after your father, you may take up his place. That will ensure you honour, riches, and a happy, comfortable life. It will also please your father."

The Way to True Knowledge.

"That may be true," replied Guru Nanak, "but what of the life to come? Will all that you wish to teach help me at the time when an account of this life must needs be rendered? No friend, such knowledge of accounts will be of no avail hereafter." The answers that the Guru gave to these and other questions of the *Pandha* are embodied in a hymn which may be translated as follows :—

" Burn thy earthly cravings, grind their ashes well,
 and make thy ink therefrom ;
Let a pure, high mind thy paper be :
Make love thy pen and heart thy writer ;
Then write as a Teacher true doth guide thee.
Write the Name of God, write his praises,
Write of the Lord that hath no limit, end, or measure ;
O Friend, learn to write this account,
So that, when and where an account is called from thee,
Thou mayest win a mark of honour true.
There, in the life to come, true honour and greatness, everlasting
 joys and eternal delights are attained ;
There shall marks of honour and acceptance be on the brows of
 those
Whose hearts enshrine the Sacred, True Name.
Not by idle words but through Grace Divine can such honour be
 won.
Some come unto the world and others depart thereform,
Yet what high sounding names they give themselves ;
Some are beggars born and some have courts both royal and
 great ;

In the life to come full well shall they know
That if their lives here be devoid of the Love of God,
All else of no account shall be. * *
In loving fear of Thee, my Lord, I ever do live,
So doth my body pine and waste away ;
For, those who were known as lords and kings,
Have I seen get mingled into dust and clay.
When a man will depart from hence, O Nanak,
All attachments false shall sundered be." (*Sri Rag*)

The schoolmaster found his Master. He acknowledged that he himself, and not the Divine pupil before him, was in need of instruction. He bowed to Guru Nanak and retired.

Change of Mood and School.

Guru Nanak attended the school for some days more and then ceased. He had learnt all that the schoolmaster could teach him. Again, there came over him the same phase which erstwhile had startled his father. Sometimes he would run and jump, frisk and gambol, with children of his age ; but more often he would sit at home, lost in profound thought, or would visit *Sadhus* and *Faqirs* in the neighbouring forests and have talks with them. The father was perturbed again. The family priest and astrologer, Hardial, now advised the Mehta to send his son to a Sanskrit scholar. " He does not like," said he, " to learn accounts and such other things. He has a religious bent of mind. Put him to school with a *Pandit*. Let him learn *Vedas* and *Shastras* and be a scholar of repute."

Communion with Nature and Creator.

This was agreed to. Guru Nanak was taken to a Sanskrit scholar named Brijnath. Here, too, the child was as quick at learning as before. In a short time this pupil, who was to be a World-teacher, convinced his new schoolmaster that he had little need for such scholastic training as the Brahmin scholar could give. Having

learnt from Brijnath as much as he deemed necessary, and having taught him what was most essential for a man of religion, Guru Nanak again took to his former ways—meditations at home and association with *Sadhus* and *Faqirs*, interrupted, now and then, by jubilant, mirthful pranks with his playmates. He would retire to the seclusion of the forests and sit there in complete abandonment. His heart would become one with Nature. Her beauty charmed him. It took his heart captive and, for hours at a stretch, he sat with wide open eyes, drinking deep with every pore of his body the joy and harmony of the scene before him. From Nature his heart rose to the feet of the Creator. His eyes would then close. A quiet glory would overspread his countenance. For hours he would sit thus enjoying the beauties of Nature and an unbroken communion with the Creator of these beauties. At such times his heart was in complete harmony with Nature and his whole being in tune with the Lord of creation. A supreme, unearthly joy filled him, body and soul, as he sat there watching the play of the Infinite in the finite Nature all round him.

Company of Ascetics.

At other times he would visit ascetics and anchorites, bands of whom frequented the dense forests around Talwandi "for the combined objects of undisturbed prayer and escape from the persecution of bigoted Moslem rulers."* He heard their learned discourses on *Vedas* and *Shastras*. But he was there not only to receive. He gave them glimpses of the Infinite Fount of knowledge Divine that intuitively flowed into his heart at all time. He learnt from them no doubt, but he learnt far more from his "undisturbed communings with nature, with his own soul, and with his Creator. The voice that had spoken to many a seer again

* Macauliffe, Vol. I, page 10

became vocal in that wilderness, and raised (Guru) Nanak's thoughts to the summit of religious exaltation. In summer's heat and winter's frost, in the glory of the firmament, in the changeful aspects of nature, as well as in the joys and sorrows of the inhabitants of his little natal village, he read in bright characters and repeated with joyous iteration the name of the Formless Creator. The Name henceforth became the object of his continual worship and meditation and indeed one of the distinctive features of his creed."*

Set to Learn Persian.

But Mehta Kalu was ill pleased at the ways of Guru Nanak. When he found his only son thus turning a truant, sore indeed was his grief. Rai Bular, who had heard of Guru Nanak's devotional temperament and had thereby taken a liking to him, sympathised with his father and said, "Don't grieve or despair Mehta. Your son is possessed of great ability. Set him to learn Persian. I could then put him in charge of my office. He will do well there. He has no doubt refused to learn accountancy and Sanskrit; but perhaps he might take to Persian. Anyhow, there is no harm in trying."

This was done. Guru Nanak was now sent to a *Mulla*, or a Muslim teacher. There, too, he astonished his teacher by the quickness with which he learnt all that the Mulla taught him. But the Mulla, too, soon found that his pupil was greater than he himself. After learning from the teacher as much as pleased his heart, Guru Nanak initiated him into a knowledge of God and made the teacher his pupil. He then kept away.†

* *Ibid* page 11.

† Some people consider the greatness of a great Master, the founder of a great system or religion, to lie in his having been quite or almost illiterate. Some devoted but overzealous admirers of Guru Nanak, too, have represented him playing truant at school and refusing to learn any-

The Early Call of Duty.

Once more, he was free to enjoy God and Nature. Long and frequent were now his communions with these inexhaustible founts of Infinite joy. But sad, depressing moments intervened between these hours of bliss. The world around him was burning with fires excited by the low, ignoble passions of fallen man. It was groaning under a heavy load of suffering that was increasing day by day. How could this plight be ended ? This thought filled him with compassion. He sat sad and mute. Then his compassionate heart would melt in a deep real sympathy for the down-trodden humanity. Thus swayed by these two opposite moods, Guru Nanak passed his days, pining for the time when he would not only make the whole human race partakers of the Boundless Joy that filled his heart and soul to the very core, but when he would himself share and lighten the burden of grief and suffering, of passion and anguish, that was crushing the very life of men. The supreme call of humanity and God was ever ringing in his soul. But the time for the response had not yet come.

thing from his teachers. This however, does not seem to be a correct appreciation of his scholastic career. His sacred compositions bespeak a vast learning which has seldom been equalled. He never hesitated to meet in argument the most learned of different creeds and lands and always came out victorious. All this testifies to the great assiduity and astonishing quickness with which he had learnt all that his teachers could teach him. Of course, his spiritual guide and teacher, as he himself declares again and again, was the One Immortal Lord Himself.

CHAPTER IV

BOYHOOD—SECULAR OCCUPATIONS

The Divine Cow-herd.

His scholastic career thus came to an early end. All the three teachers to whom he had been sent had acknowledged him their teacher. He had learnt a little from all of them no doubt, but had taught them a good deal more. Mehta Kalu was puzzled. His only son had shown aversion to qualifying himself for earning a living. At last he thought within himself, " Nanak loves to live in the forests. He is fond of solitude. Why not send him to tend cattle ? He will be free to roam and muse, and will also be engaged in some useful work. Perhaps he may take to this sort of work and be able to eke out a living, howsoever humble."

Guru Nanak was anxious to obey and please his father as far as he could. It was no lack of such hearty intention that provided his father with food for grief. It was the strong, mysterious urge for the great duty charged with which he had come into the world that took him captive in the midst of his secular occupations. It was the vision of the great humane task which waited him that made him merge deep in soul-stirring thought. It was the call of the care-laden, suffering humanity that permitted him no leisure for the tasks that his father would yoke him to.

So, when his father told him what his new task was to be, Guru Nanak gladly obeyed. Thus for a time the great World-teacher, who was to tend and feed with the bread of God the souls of men and lift and lead them to the Abode of the Infinite Lord, tended his father's cattle. As they grazed in the

forest, he would sit or roam as duty would demand or as his impulse would dictate. He had ample opportunities of giving reins to his master passion. Nature, with all her grandeur and beauty, was now his companion for the whole day. He was happy. Every evening he returned home with a joyous beaming face. This pleased the heart af Mehta Kalu. His only son, who had played almost a truant at school, was now taking to an occupation which, though not likely to yield honour and riches, could yet be honest and profitable.

In Tune with the Infinite.

For some time things went on all right. One day, as he sat under a tree, opening out his heart and soul to the Beloved that he found pervading the wide stretch of Nature before him, his eyes closed. The Great Charmer had entered his heart and locked Himself in. Guru Nanak became thus captive in the life-giving embrace of his Beloved Lord. He saw nothing, he heard nothing, he thought nothing of the outer world. The cattle grazed as they would. They strayed into a neighbour's field. The owner of the field drove out the cattle and came in great rage to the place where Guru Nanak sat in the lap of his Maker. Finding him 'asleep', he began to mutter, "What a wary herdsman, this! Himself he sleeps and lets his cattle graze at will and ruin poor people's crops. Little does he realize the grief that grips the hearts of us tillers of the soil when our crops, raised with great toil and labour, are thus ruined by stray cattle. See, how free of care he sleeps! Get thou up, O sluggard!"

Guru Nanak came to himself. He uttered '*Dhann Nirankar*, O Sublime, Formless Lord,' and opened his eyes. He saw the farmer and heard his remonstrances. With a smile on his lips he said, "Let go, my friend. Be not enraged. What if God's dumb creatures have taken a few bites from thy crops? The Bountiful Lord who is the

creator not only of thyself and thy fields and crops, but also of these cattle, will bless you with plenty. You will have no cause to grieve." But the owner of the field was not to be appeased. He took the Divine Child to Rai Bular and told him of what had happened. The by-standers informed the Rai that Mehta Kalu's son was rather insane; hence there was no good remonstrating with him. So the Mehta was sent for. Rai Bular told him to compensate the farmer for the damage done to his crops. We can imagine what must have passed in the heart of the father. His only son having proved a 'failure' at school, had now done something worse. He had made him receive a public reproach from his employer. There was also the compensation that had to be paid. The Divine Child read the mind of his father. He addressed Rai Bular and said, "But before pronouncing judgment, would you not examine the crops that are said to have been damaged? God is merciful. How could a few bites by His creatures be the cause of injury to a poor man's crop?" The Rai sent his men. They came running back and said, "The crop is untouched. It seems richer and greener in the place where this man reported the cattle to have caused a damage."

Rai Bular Enters the Path.

All were astonished. The Rai, who had already heard of Guru Nanak's budding greatness and of his having taught his teachers, besought the Divine Child to grant him a little light. "You are surely a Yogi," said the Rai, "an ascetic or a great saint. Give me a little of this great gift."

Guru Nanak, with half-shut eyes, and in a soft, sweet voice, sang a Divine Song which may be freely translated as under:—

"Let Yogis practise Yoga; let the Epicureans enjoy their fill; let the Penitents practise penance and rub and bathe

themselves in holy waters. They lack the inner vision. I would have none of their mainfold practices. Thy call, O Beloved Lord of all, doth ever ring in my heart. I hear Thy call every moment of my life. Others can hear it, too. All can hear it, if they will. Let a man retire within himself, sit in quiet thought and sing the praises of the All-pervading Lord. Then will he surely hear the Divine call. But if a man knew how to do this rightly, he would not sit idle. He will know that whatever he soweth that shall he reap ; whatever he earneth that shall he enjoy. So he must engage himself in good and useful deeds. At the same time, he should ever remember and praise the Lord. He should engrave the Name of the Lord on the tablet of his soul. Then will he be honoured in the life to come. There his condition will depend on his acts in this life. Every breath that is drawn without the thought of God is wasted in vain. This body, this life, is of no use if it is not well used in the twofold path of performing good and useful deeds and making a constant remembrance of God the habit of the soul. "*

Rai Bular bowed. Others who had the ears to hear the divine message of Guru Nanak also bowed. All went their way. The field which was the cause of all this is now the site of a Gurdwara called the *Kiara Sahib* or the Sacred Field.

The Sacrificial Thread.

Kalu now rejoiced to see his son ever in high spirits. Guru Nanak seemed to be taking a keen interest in his occupation. He enjoyed it. The father thanked his stars for this change in his son. He resolved to invest him with the Hindu sacrificial thread. The day was fixed. All friends, relatives, neighbours, and religious men of the locality were invited. When the preliminary rites had been performed,

* Guru Nanak, *Rag Suhi*.

the family priest, Hardial, lifted his hand to put the thread round Guru Nanak's neck. People were getting ready words of congratulations which were usually showered on the child's father on such occasions. But a surprise was in store for all of them. With a loving, thoughtful smile playing on his lips, the Divine child caught the priest's uplifted hand and asked, "What are you about, dear pandit ?" Hardial replied, "This is the sacred thread by wearing which thou wilt be admitted to the position of the Twice-born. Without it a man is a Sudra. This thread will give thee honour both here and hereafter. So let me put it round thy neck."

"How," said Nanak, "can this thread of thine made from cotton give one honour in the life to come ? It remains with the body. It does not accompany the soul in its long journey after death. There every one goes threadless. Give me a thread that will really help my soul in the life to come."

"But," replied Hardial, "the great holy Rishis of old, who had a true knowledge of God as well as of the needs of the soul in its journey to Him, have ordained the wearing of this triple thread for the Twice-born Hindus. They believed that it would help the wearer both in this life and the next. Moreover, if this thread will not satisfy you, what sort of thread would you have ? Whence has it to be had ?"

The Thread for the Soul.

"That I can tell thee," replied the Divine child. "The lasting, sacred thread for the soul should be made from a realization in practical life of noble, lofty ideals of true religion and morality. Let mercy be the cotton, contentment the thread, purity the knots, and truth the needed twist. Blend these virtues together in thy every-day life. Thereby thy soul will be invested with a thread which will never get old or dirty, burnt or lost, and which will never break. A man who has such a thread round his neck is truly blessed.

He needs no other thread. So, not this thread for me which can be had from the bazar so cheap and which gets old, dirty, and broken."

Hardial felt his wisdom and learning failing him. To be thus put out by a child in the presence of that big gathering was too much for him. He had hoped that Guru Nanak would be a great apostle of the decaying Hindu religion. But here was a rude shock for him. Nanak had refused to respect the Hindu initiation ceremony. So he mustered courage and said, " Dear child, we must respect the custom initiated by the great Rishis. A Hindu without this thread is a man without a religion. I am sure you are to be a man of religion. So wear the thread."

" What religion does thy thread give to the wearer? Around me I see that men who pride themselves on being Twice-born, and round whose necks this cotton thread has been put by learned Brahmins, are committing the foulest deeds. They rob and kill, lie and deceive, give reins to lust and greed, and commit a thousand sins and crimes against their fellow creatures. Their souls are polluted to the core. Is this the religion which thy thread has given them? What a religion! I would have none of it."

" True," replied the Brahmin, " people have fallen in character. This thread used to be the mark of a lofty, religious life. This it has ceased to be to a great extent. Still, the remedy lies not in discarding the ancient custom but in reforming men's character. So come, please. Don't shake your head. Do you think all the rishis of old, and all your sires besides, have been mere fools? If this thread does not please you, what sort of thread would you have?"

" I have told you this already. The true thread is to be had by the acquisition and practice of noble qualities, by praising God, and by leading a life of an ever-constant,

unbroken consciousness of his presence in and around us everywhere. By realizing the Will of the Supreme Lord in his daily life does a man obtain a thread on which he can rely with confidence. The thread thus obtained will be truly the thread of the soul It will never get old or fall away. It will ever accompany the wearer in this life and the next. It will take him into the presence of the Blissful Lord and win for him a place of honour in His court. Such a thread would I gladly wear."

The Brahmin could argue no longer. So he said, "What you have said is all true. We are truly without a true thread of the soul, we would wear that too. But you are without a thread of the body. Wear it now, and then we all can strive to have a thread for the soul, too."

All Go Threadless.

"Are you sure," said the Divine child, "that even your bodies have the needed string? I find none anywhere. There is no string to bind the sexual organs and restrain them from lust and vice, there is no string to hands and feet which could keep them from evil doings, there is no string for the tongue, nor one for the eyes which would keep them from sensual, sinful pleasures Yes, the whole body has no string. Nay, the whole community is going threadless. Mark the consequent degradation all round. How high you hold your head in pride of your high caste. The thread has verily proved a curse for the community Having engendered caste pride, it has broken asunder all ties of union, and chains are now around your necks All this because you wear not the true thread. Yet you would spin threads of cotton, and, assembling all in one place, enjoy a feast, and put threads, false and now positively harmful, round the necks of others. What a huge joke! And what an unheard of wonder! People who are blind in the soul pose as seers and come audaciously forward to guide others over paths which they themselves cannot see. I for one will not follow such a guide."

Hardial was rendered speechless. All present felt how true was all that the Divine child had said or hinted at. His analysis of the fall of the Hindu community and the advent of tyranny and political subjection was felt to be right. The Brahmin and others, who had come to invest the Divine child with the sacred thread, realized that they themselves were threadless. Hardial bowed to the child and said, "True, child. Our community has fallen very low. There is no help. Each of us should try to save his soul. Who is there to take up the risky, arduous task of uplifting a downtrodden, subject race?"

Who Should Save?

Guru Nanak's eyes flashed with a heavenly lustre and, in the next instant, softly closed. He took a deep breath and sang, "When the Lord in His mercy sends Grace to a man, He puts him to the task that He would get peformed. It is not for us to choose. That servant and that alone can serve the Lord whom He chooses to follow His commands and to carry out His Will. By obeying his behests, by carrying out His Will, the servant will win His satisfaction and get a place of honour in the Lord's palace. If he does what pleases his Lord, he will certainly obtain all that in his heart he may wish or desire. He would become acceptable to the Father above and, having performed his allotted task in the world, would enter the court divine arrayed in honour."[1]

The Brahmin and the rest had to go away, musing within themselves on the 'miracle' that they had witnessed.

The Twofold Duty.

For some time more the Divine child continued tending his father's cattle as best as he could. He wanted to be a dutiful son and obey his earthly father. But there was the heavenly Father, too, who was ever beckoning him to

* The Guru's replies to the priest were later embodied by him in his composition called *Asa di Var*

undertake the great task for which He had sent him into the world. This call of the Bewitching Lord came uncalled and at odd moments. When it came, the Divine child was gripped like a captive. And the cattle? Well, they grazed where they liked, tended by gods and angels, as the Divine child sat in the lap of his Father. This communion with the Blissful Lord affected the child's visible life. His heart and soul gushed with a strange, abiding joy. He would sing his Master's glory in verses whose appeal went straight to the core of the heart. He held discourses with all who would. To all he appeared to be an active lad with a religious bent of mind.

Nature Serves and Shades Him.

As he sat in the forest, one day, the Divine fingers invisibly touched the strings of his heart; a delicious, inaudible melody broke forth, filled his whole being, and lifted and bound him to the Lotus feet of the Bewitching Lord. For long did he remain in that posture. Then he lay down to rest. The day passed on. The sun descended well to the west. The shadows of the trees veered round to the east. But the sun's rays touched not the body of the Divine youth as he lay there in their path. Something invisible had intervened between him and the sun. It seemed that the shadow of the tree had remained stationary.* Rai Bular passing by in the afternoon witnessed this "miracle" On another occasion, while the cattle grazed in the forest tended by gods and angels, Guru Nanak lay down under a tree. After some time, through a space among the leaves and

* This incident is given in all accounts of the Guru's life. As for its being against the "laws of Nature", the reader is invited to turn to Appendix B and study the question in the light of observations made there. Modern Psychical and Spiritual research carried on by some of the most prominent scientists of the world has shown that even more wonderful and seemingly impossible things than the one narrated above do truly happen and defy all known laws of Nature.

branches, the sun's rays began to fall on his face. A big, white cobra came out from its hole, spread its wide hood, and protected his face against the sun. By a strange accident, Rai Bular passed again that way. As he beheld the cobra with the large out-stretched hood, the Rai's heart was filled with fear lest the youthful saint should be bitten. But, as he hastily approached the place, the cobra smoothly crept away. Guru Nanak awoke. Rai Bular was standing mute in wonder. He had heard much about Mehta Kalu's son but now he had seen far more. He found that the whole Nature, animate and inanimate, loved the Divine youth and did him service and homage And it could not have been otherwise. He beheld the Creator ever indwelling in all His creation. He was one with Nature and her indwelling Lord. How could Nature let a part and parcel of herself and a dear one of her Lord be exposed to uncomfortable heat ? The all-embracing love that ever flowed from his heart had charmed the cobra out of its hole and made it shield him with its hood. He had given himself up wholly to the Lord of the Universe and, by His Will, the whole universe was now at his service.*

Rai Bular's heart was won. He hugged the youthful saint to his bosom. A sweet, abiding peace and joy filled his heart. He took the youth with him to Mehta Kalu and congratulated him on having such a one as his son. He advised him not to reproach the youth for his indifference to his worldly affairs.

Strange Passive Mood.

Days passed on. Guru Nanak gave up tending cattle. A strange, passive mood overcame him. He would either sit alone all day long in the forest, seek out sadhus and have discussions with them, or lie at home, apparently in dejected spirits. For days he would eat nothing. Sometimes

* *Cf.* Shaikh Farid's Shlok which makes God say, "If thou becomest mine altogether, the whole world thine shall be."

he would sing his matchless Divine songs, at others he would shed tears of joy and sorrow. People said that his insanity had now become fully developed. Others, more religious minded, said that his heart had become completel estranged from the world. He would soon renounce his home and be a full-fledged recluse. All attempts made by his fond father and mother to persuade him out of this dejection proved abortive. When they represented to him the necessity of his taking to agriculture, or some trade, he replied that he had already sown the crops to raise and distribute which he had come into the world; he had already begun the trade by which he was to buy out the souls of men from the bondage of sorrow and suffering, from the cycle of life and death. When his mother said that, to disprove the people's talk of his having become insane, he should give up for a few days his religious preoccupation and take to some work, he replied that he could not live even a moment without repeating the Name. He would die the instant that he forgot the Lord and gave up communion with Him. When he was asked to eat and drink, he said that he had but one hunger—that for the true Lord. He was ever striving to satisfy that craving of his soul. He felt no physical hunger or thirst, no discomfort of any kind. How could he forget the True Lord who sustains the whole creation?

A Physician Sent for.

For four days at a stretch Guru Nanak lay at home. He spoke with none. He ate or drank nothing. His people thought that something was wrong with his system. A physician was sent for. As he held Guru Nanak's wrist to feel the pulse, the latter smiled a winsome smile, withdrew his arm, and said, "What are you about, my friend?" The physician replied that, by feeling his pulse, he was going to diagnose his trouble. He would then prescribe a suitable remedy. The smile on the lips of the Divine child waxed more bright. In a sweet, melodious voice he sang,

"The physician has been called his art to show ;
Gripping my arm my pulse doth he try ;
But alas, the simple physician doth not know
That the pain in my heart doth lie." (*Var Malar*)

"Go home," continued he, "thou art ill-fitted to know what ails me."

"Then describe thy symptoms thyself. Let me know thy trouble, and I shall choose a proper remedy."

The Real Pain.

"O simple physician, don't trouble thyself. Give me no medicine, for no medicine of thine, my friend, can remove the pain that I feel or the suffering that my body undergoes. What ails me, do you ask ? Listen. The acutest pain that grips my heart and soul is the sense of separation from my Beloved Lord. Then there is the constant, unsatisfied hunger for His Name that tortures me with its pangs. Still another of my troubles that ever gnaws at my heart is the thought of death. All these pains consume my body and make me pine away. What medicine is there in thy stock against the disease which springs from a forget-fulness of the True Lord and a devotion to sensual pleasures ? How can you cure the wicked, blind heart which has thus brought on itself an endless punishment ? Thy medicines could perhaps cure the ailments of the flesh and could be taken as long as there is life in it. They have no effect on the soul. I'll tell thee a never-failing medicine which can make the body as bright as gold and the soul most pure and serene. Name, the Blissful Name of the Glorious Lord, is the all-curing medicine. Take in but ever so little of this precious drug and thou wilt find thy body and soul not only freed of all pain and suffering, but also rendered pure, radiant, and strong. Gladly shall I take such a medicine if thou hast one, my friend. Physician, first heal thyself ; then freely go about healing others."*

* Guru Nanak, *Rag Malar, Ghar* 2.

As he said this, he fixed his loving, penetrating look into the eyes of the physician A quiver went through the body of the latter. He felt that he, and not Guru Nanak, was in need of a remedy. And he had got it. That look and those words had done their work. The physician was healed by the patient. He bowed and went away in silence, musing over the words of the strange youth. He was convinced that the Divine youth for whom he had come to prescribe would heal and render whole the ailing bodies, the aching lacerated hearts, and the afflicted souls of his fellowmen. Before going he said to Mehta Kalu, "Cheer up, good sir, your son is a great one. He is not ill. He has come to heal mankind."

The Physician Healed.

CHAPTER V

THE UNPARDONABLE OFFENCE

The Two Phases

For three months Guru Nanak remained in that passive listless mood. He ate little, he spoke little, and he moved little. His parents were naturally anxious about their only son whom *Pandits* and *Mullas* had failed to teach, whom the physician had failed to heal, and in whom all had discovered signs of some mysterious greatness of which they, his parents, had no inkling. They were helpless, however. They sighed and kept quiet.

The phase then ended. Guru Nanak, who was a youth of about sixteen now, threw aside the lethargy which had, to all appearances, possessed him for over three months. He began to move about, to associate and talk with youths of his own age, and to eat and drink as an ordinary healthy man. His parents were glad. They thought that their son had recovered from the mysterious illness which had laid him low for three long months.

Set to Make a Good Bargain.

Mehta Kalu now thought that it was time to make his son engage in some trade or business. So he called Guru Nanak into his presence and said, "Son, it is time that you should learn to earn a living. You have proved a failure at school and also as a cowherd. What will you do? You are no child now. We hope to see you married in the near future Unless you learn a profitable trade, how will you support your family and your parents who are getting old? I have thought of a plan. I shall give you a small sum. With that you should make a good, profitable bargain.

I would suggest that to begin with, you should purchase from near-abouts articles that can be sold at a profit here. When, after a few trips you get experienced, and also lay by a little capital, you can go further abroad and engage in greater bargains. How do you like the proposal?"

Guru Nanak replied, " Father, I long to obey and please you. If I fail, it is not for lack of effort or intention. Some mysterious force takes hold of me. I shall try my best to do as you bid me."

Men of God in Need of Food.

So Guru Nanak was given a sum of twenty rupees and told to make a good bargain with it. Bala, a trusted servant of the Mehta, accompanied him. The two started towards Chuharkana, a village about twelve miles from Talwandi. As they wended their way, they noticed a cluster of trees. Guru Nanak turned his steps in that direction. Why? The same mysterious power which ever swayed his body and soul was now directing his steps. He was going to make a mighty good bargain. Bala followed him. In that cluster of trees they found a company of Sadhus. These men of religion had no covering for their bodies excepting the loin-cloths. They were all engaged in diverse forms of penance. Their bodies were weak and lean. Guru Nanak approached one of them and began to talk with him. He learnt that the Sadhus had had no food for the last several days. Their vows forbade them to go and beg for food. They were given to roaming about and halting in secluded places, away from the haunts of men. In their too great concern for the soul they were altogether neglecting their body. For physical sustenance they relied on God. They were content to eat when and whatever He was pleased to send. The Divine youth was deeply impressed by their faith and trust in God. The pangs of hunger that they had borne for several days

made a powerful appeal to his heart. He felt the money in his pocket. Here were men of God in great need of food. How could he pass by them unconcerned with a sum in his pocket that could satisfy their want ? His compassionate heart urged him to decide and act at once. Could there be a better bargain than that of feeding hungry mouths ? He took the money from his pocket and placed it before the Sadhu. The latter declined to touch it. " You are a young man yet," said the Sadhu. " Perhaps your parents may not like this act of yours and you may have to suffer in consequence. You need not worry about us. God, whom we seek and serve, and in whom we trust, will send us food when it pleases Him. We can wait till then."

" Don't mind what happens to me," said Guru Nanak. " I shall bear it. The body has to be ruled by the soul and not the soul by the body. My soul is touched at the sight of your sufferings, voluntary as they are. I can't go away without doing what I can to allay them. God seems to have sent me hither for this very purpose."

Strikes the Good Bargain.

The Sadhu, thereupon, told the Divine youth that money was of no use to them. They would not touch it. He should, if he was so inclined, bring them articles of food. So Guru Nanak and his companion went and purchased as much provisions as could be had for the sum and carried them to the ascetics. They broke their several days' fast and blessed the youth whom God had sent to feed them. The place where the hungry mouths were fed by Guru Nanak is the site of a Gurdwara called the *Khara Sauda* or the Good Bargain.

The Sacred Tent.

Having invested his capital in a bargain which to him appeared to be the best and the most profitable, Guru Nanak retraced his steps towards Talwandi. His whole being was

elated with joy and satisfaction. He had fed the hungry and done his duty by man and God. As they approached Talwandi, Guru Nanak's thoughts reverted to his father. "He sent me to make a good bargain. I have obeyed him according to my own light and capacity. But he will not understand this. He will think that I have thrown away his money. He will be angry. Why not keep away from his wrath as long as possible?" So he sent Bhai Bala to the village but himself he stayed out. He sat concealed under a tree and passed the night there.* In the morning Mehta Kalu came to know of the return of Bala. He was naturally perplexed at the non-appearance of his son. He guessed what it meant. Summoning Bala into his presence, he enquired about his son. Bala told him the whole story and added, "I pleaded with him, but he would not listen. He said that he was obeying you. When, last evening, we came near the village, he concealed himself near the tank as perhaps he had begun to fear your anger. I did my duty and am not to blame."

The Beating.

Mehta Kalu's anger knew no bounds. He ran to the place, dragged out his son from under the hanging branches of the tree, and began to slap him, right and left, till his cheeks were black and blue with the beating. Thus did the Master suffer for having taken pity on his fellowmen. He bore the slaps of his fond, worldly father with an unruffled quiet, offering each cheek in turn to receive the fast-falling blows. He showed no anger, he offered no resistance, he evaded no slap. Without a murmur, he let his body bear the consequences of the noble act performed in obedience to its master, the soul.

* The tree is now the site of a Gurdwara called *Tambu Sahib*, or the Sacred Tent

Rai Bular's Grief.

Rai Bular heard of this incident. He had already become an ardent admirer and a true disciple of the Master. When he heard that the Divine youth had been beaten black and blue by Mehta Kalu, very sad was he. He sent for the Mehta and said, "What have you done? Why did you beat this holy man? And what a beating! Look at his cheeks where your hands have played havoc! Didn't I tell you never to ill-treat this great man? You always think of him as your son. You fail to understand him. Was it for twenty rupees that your ire was so excited? You could have double that sum from me. You shouldn't have beaten your only son for that. What a father you have proved!"

Mehta Kalu's Remonstrances.

Mehta Kalu felt that all present were wrongly accusing him of greed and hard-heartedness. He had to defend and justify himself. So he said, "Rai Sahib, it does not become me to gainsay what you say. But put yourself in my place and see how painful it is. He is my only son; hence my sorrow at his foolish conduct is all the greater. He has proved a failure at school. He was too idle to be a good cowherd. He paid no heed to agriculture. He gives away my humble earnings to idlers and beggars. He is of age to look about for a means of livelihood. I sent him to earn something by making a good, profitable bargain. And what has he done? He has thrown away my hard-earned money. The sum is not very big, no doubt. But this has shown me which way the wind blows. He will waste away all that I have earned or shall earn. This thought allows me no rest. It made me angry. As his father, it was my duty to correct him. So I gave him a few slaps. He will behave better in future. Yet you reproach me for having done my duty by him. You may, sir, but you should rather pity me."

Rai Bular's Warning.

Rai Bular answered, "Short-sighted Kalu, when will your eyes begin to see? He is not an ordinary man to behave like ordinary people. He has great things to do He has not disobeyed you even. He has carried out your orders to the letter. You sent him to make a good and profitable bargain. That he did. What better bargain could there be? I shall pay you the sum so well invested by him. I wish I could take him to my house and be a slave unto him. But the prevalent usage forbids it. People will talk. Take heed, Mehta. If you ill-treat him again, I shall devise means to get him away from you."

The Unpardonable Offence.

The incredulous Mehta was astonished at what seemed to him the simplicity of Rai Bular. But to dispute the point further would have been injudicious. He kept quiet and went away. For some days all went well. The Divine youth was allowed to live as he pleased. He, too, did nothing that could excite the Mehta's anger. But how long could that be? How could the Divine call be silenced or put down? How could the ever-tuned harp of his godly, human, sensitive heart be made dull and irresponsive to the divine melody and the still, sad music of humanity which, for him, surcharged the very air that he breathed? Some time after, as he was returning home after a bath, he met a mendicant who begged alms from him in the name of God. An appeal made in the name of his Lord by a poor, homeless man was too strong for him to resist. He gave the beggar a drinking vessel of brass which he had in his hand and a ring of gold which was on his finger. Mehta Kalu came to know of it. He was exasperated. He bade his son either mend his ways or leave his house.

Rai Bular's Deep Concern.

Rai Bular was by now a disciple-in-spirit of Guru Nanak. He heard of the fresh estrangement between the father and son. It made him sad. It

set him thinking how best to put an end to these vexatious family quarrels, how best to secure for the Guru a life where he could freely follow the dictates of his heart and soul. He was convinced that as long as Guru Nanak lived with his well-meaning but worldly-wise father, there could be no end to such troubles. It wasnecessary that Guru Nanak should go somewhere else.

The Rai was thus on the look-out for a suitable place where he could persuade his Master to go, when an event occurred which promised to solve the problem. Bhai Jai Ram, who was the husband of Bebe Nanaki and a diwan at the court of Daulat Khan Lodi of Sultanpur, came on a visit to Talwandi. He heard the bitter complaints of his father-in-law against, the idle, squandering habits of Guru Nanak. He heard of the sort of life that Guru Nanak then lived and the great respect in which he was held by many people of the village. He also met Rai Bular who complained of the ill-treatment which Guru Nanak got from his father. They put their heads together and decided that Diwan Jai Ram should find a job for Guru Nanak at Sultanpur and then send for him there. Mehta Kalu gladly agreed. Guru Nanak gave his consent to go when called.

CHAPTER VI

AT SULTANPUR

Divine Store-keeper.

Diwan Jai Ram soon succeeded in his mission. So he wrote the promised letter inviting the Guru to Sultanpur. Guru Nanak took leave of his parents and friends and started towards the city of his sister. A few days after his arrival there he was introduced to the Governor of the place. Daulat Khan was pleased at the learning, manner, and bearing of the youth. He gave him a dress of honour in token of having engaged him in his service and put him in charge of his *Modikhana* or Storehouse.* Guru Nanak applied himself to his new duties in right good earnest. They were admirably suited to the inclinations of his temperament. He had to deal out provisions. He had ample opportunities of satisfying his master passion, that of open-handed charity. But he was careful not to give away more than what his own pay and allowance could meet. His scrupulously honest, amiable, and straightforward dealings with all who got or bought rations from the Storehouse soon won for him the good opinion of all. He came to be greatly esteemed by all who came in touch with him.

* At that time land revenue was collected in kind. The grain thus collected was stored in a place called *Modikhana*. From there it was issued out to the ruler's household, army, etc., and sold to those who would buy. It was such a duty that Guru Nanak did. He was not placed in charge of the alms-house as Latif would have us believe; for, as we shall see, the Guru had to render an account of the commodities placed in his charge. Such would not have been the case if the *Modikhana* had been an alms-house. Moreover, the complaints made against him to the Nawab were that he had given away the contents of the *Modikhana* to the poor. An alms-house would have been meant for that very purpose and no complaints could have been raised against Guru Nanak's charity.

The good report reached the Nawab, too. He came to have full confidence in the storekeeper about whom all spoke so highly.

The Song of Dedication.

While executing so well the duties of his office, Guru Nanak did not neglect or forget his divine duties. He was in tune with the Lord now as ever before. He would get up early, about a watch before day-break, and go out into the neighbouring forest to enjoy an un-interrupted communion with the Lord of the Universe. He would bathe in the little stream called *Vein*. Then sitting on its banks, he would dive deep into the ocean of ecstasy, and fly on the wings of the soul to the lotus feet of the Blissful Lord. As he watched the heavens above, inset with countless sparkling, twinkling starry gems, as he observed their reflection in the heaving bosom of the slow-moving stream, as he beheld Nature all round him clothed in a blissful peace, as the cool breeze from the stream gently fanned his worshipful face, a heavenly calm descended upon his heart, a thrill of quiet, refreshing joy imperceptibly passed through his whole being, and his soul expanded to engulf the whole universe in its embrace of love. He sat there charmed by the sublimity of all that he heard, felt, or saw. He would sit there for long, wrapt in mute adoration. Then the bliss that filled him through and through would break forth into heavenly music. He would sing the praises of the Lord. This continued till the rise of the sun. Then he would return to his worldly duties. There, too, while his body was engaged in the performance of his work, his heart and soul were with his Maker. It is recorded that when, in weighing out rations, he reached the number thirteen—*tera*—, he would pause, his face would assume a look of strange intoxication, and he would several times repeat, in his sweet melodious voice, the word *tera* which also means, " Thine, All is Thine O Lord." If the

persons to whom the grain had to be dealt out happened to be poor customers, he would go on weighing it out to them and count each weighing as *tera* or thirteen. Blessed indeed were they on whom was thus bestowed unasked divine food for the soul as they came to have the food for the body! This simple song of dedication composed of one word charmed the hearers. As long as he sang, they all stood mute and spell-bound. In the evening he would retire again to the forest and give himself up to an enjoyment of blissful communion with the Lord. His love for the company of religious men—Sadhus and Faqirs—was fresh and strong as ever. He loved to feast all ascetics and wandering faqirs who came to the city.

Marriage Plans.

His open-handed charity won him the love of the poor and the needy. But his sister and brother-in-law felt uneasy; for he was not saving much out of his earnings. They knew that his father would be distressed to learn that his son was throwing away on beggars and faqirs all that he earned. They put their heads together and devised a plan whereby he could probably be induced to be less free with his earnings. They decided to marry him. They were afraid lest the religious zeal which by then was quite clearly visible in his nature should become too strong and lead him to renounce the world altogether and become a recluse. So they decided to yoke him to family life. They believed that conjugal affection would cure him of the slight 'waywardness' which his too frequent meetings with Sadhus had produced in his temperament. All that love and consideration which till then he had been bestowing on others would be diverted towards his wife and children. He would become a thrifty man of the world, laying by a good part of his earnings for the upkeep of his family. They knew how happy Mehta Kalu would be on hearing the good news of his son's reversion to real family life.

Thus did the fond relatives hope to wean him from that life of the spirit to which he had come to lead all men. Thus would they imprison in the family circle the affections that were to flow for the whole human race; thus would they tie down with family ties the spirit that was to break the chains from round the necks of millions of his fellow creatures; thus would they enchain his soul that even then was given to fly as freely as a bird in the skies and dive deep into the fathomless ocean of ecstasy. They might as well have tried to hold the winds in their grip or bidden the waves of the sea to be still. Even Guru Nanak himself was powerless to resist, divert, or withstand the divine call. When it came, he was himself no longer. In fact, he lived ever in the arms of the Beloved Lord even as a fish ever lives in the bosom of the river or lake. To use his own words, "He was in love with God; he lived, moved, and had his being in the Lord. In his love he would laugh, in his love he would weep and cry like a child, and in His love he would sit dumb and mute. He cared for none except his true, beloved Master at whose door he ever begged for the food of the body and spirit, and partook of it when He was pleased to bestow it." * Not for himself alone was he gathering the spiritual treasures, but for the whole human race.

Marriage.

Still Guru Nanak's was to be a path different from the paths known to the world before. He was to show how true life of religion could be lived amid the ties and duties of family life. So he agreed to get married. At the age of about nineteen he was married to Mata Sulakhni, the daughter of Baba Mula, a resident of Batala in the present district of Gurdaspur. But the marriage was powerless to divert his heart and soul from the path that he had come to lay down for humanity.

* *Asa di Var.*

He tried to be as considerate a husband as was consistent with his life of the spirit.

Mardana gets a Wedding Gift.

His parents had come to see him married. They were glad to learn that their son had, by a diligent discharge of his duties, earned a good name and was to all appearances on a good way to riches. They were happy to hope that thenceforth he would give up his infatuation for Sadhus and Faqirs and divert that love to his wife and family. His loving companions of Talwandi who had become enamoured of him had also come. The first among them was Mardana, the musician. He asked the Master for a wedding gift and got a *rabab* or rebeck. What with his own inborn aptitude for music, and what with the loving favour of his Divine Master, Mardana turned out to be a peerless musician and singer. He would play on the rebeck as the Guru sang his spontaneous divine songs in a sweet melodious voice, or he would sweetly sing those songs stored in a tenacious memory as the Master sat in mute adoration. Others also came. A regular *satsang* gathered there. The Guru fed them all out of the rations that were permitted him with his salary. He had no liking for hoarding. He distributed all he got. To many of the persons who had followed him from Talwandi he procured some or other employment at Sultanpur. They were, all of them, his disciples. They adored him. In the evenings all assembled to listen to the divine songs and discourses of the master. Out of them Bhai Bhagirath and Bhai Mansukh are still remembered for their love and devotion to the Guru. Mansukh was the first person to record the Divine songs of the master as they were sung by him.

Ideal Life for a Youth.

Time passed quietly by. Guru Nanak seemed at last to have found an occupation that in every way satisfied him. He seemed to have grown out of his early aversion to the affairs of the world. He seemed to have

arranged a compromise between his own love for seclusion and his parents' desire for a busy worldly life for him. He was proving to be an honest and capable employee, a loving and generous friend, a neighbour inspired by active sympathy for all, a citizen of free open-handed charity, an excellent householder, and a pious, holy man of religion. Two sons were born to him, the first, Sri Chand, in 1494, and the second, Lakhmi Das, in 1497 A.D. Respected by the public, trusted and honoured by his employer, loved by his disciples and companions, and adored by his wife, he lived a life of happiness and peace. This seemed to be the ideal life for a young man. But Guru Nanak had a higher mission. The sad still music, the plaintive voice of poor, afflicted humanity that he ever heard in his soul would sometimes catch him in the midst of his songs or reveries. Tears would flow down his cheeks. A quiver would run through his body. A yearning for making an immediate response to the call of humanity overcame him at such times. He would wish to go at once and cool and soothe the burning world. But the time was not yet. The Divine call had not yet come. He was to wait for that. A circle of disciples gathered round him at Sultanpur, and he contented himself for the time being with kindling their spirits with the heavenly spark that he had got as a gift from God.

Malicious Reports.

Evil natures would discover faults even in the faultless. The fame of Guru Nanak excited jealousy in some evil breasts. Some did not like his 'thoughtless' charity; others disliked his free association with men of all castes and creeds; some did not relish his iconoclastic religious views which he disseminated with effective zeal; others could not bear to hear him praised by religious-minded Hindus and Muslims alike; some were jealous because of his being held in high esteem by the Nawab. They did what they thought

would ruin his credit with the Nawab, put an end to his charities, and thereby push him to the background. They reported to the Nawab that the storekeeper was squandering away the contents of the storehouse. It would be empty in no time. Twice or thrice, on the basis of such reports, the Nawab checked the accounts. Every time some balance was found due to the Divine storekeeper. One time Guru Nanak was even kept confined in a room pending the examination of his accounts. That room is now the site of a Gurdwara called *Kothri Sahib* or the Sacred Cell. Each time Guru Nanak's credit with the Nawab increased till the latter gave up listening to the evil reports of ill-meaning persons.

CHAPTER VII

THE CALL

Waiting for the Call.

For ten years or so Guru Nanak thus demonstrated to the world what he had come to teach, namely, how a man of religion, loving and serving God through a loving service of his creation, should live in the world, for the world, and yet be above the world—laughing, enjoying, making merry, eating and drinking, and performing all the duties of an official, a householder, and a man of the world, and yet maintaining, all the time, an attitude of aloofness, detachment, and renunciation towards the alluring things of the world ; keeping ever in tune with the Infinite Lord. By precept and example, by his divine touch, he initiated many into this life of the Spirit. But for how long could the bush conceal the sun ? How could Talwandi or Sultanpur monopolize the precious divine commodity which was meant for the whole world ? He was not to save only a few hundred people of these two places. Humanity called him to be its saviour. There was an anguish in the voice of humanity, the confused murmur that arose from the human depths and that, comprising in it all tears, all agonies, all afflictions, became the sigh of the whole creation, a sigh for one who would end the suffering and make all happy and full of joy. Night and day the call of humanity would quietly steal into his heart and, gathering force and volume, grow into a loud lament as that of a child left all alone and lost in a vast, limitless wilderness. But he was waiting for the call from above. He would go forth when bidden. The call came at last.

Drowned ?

One day, in the year 1497 A.D. he went out to bathe as usual in the stream. An attendant sat near his clothes. He plunged into the stream, at the place since called the *Sant Ghat*. He delayed too long that day. The servant waited in great anxiety. He then looked into and along the stream, but there was no sign of Guru Nanak. At last the servant sadly concluded that his master must have been drowned. He went and informed Jai Ram. Soon, the news spread in the town. The Nawab also heard it. People flocked to the river. The Nawab also reached the spot. Divers were ordered to search for the body. They failed. All returned to the city in great sorrow.

Why and Where Gone ?

His disappearance caused evil tongues to be busy again. It was said that he had squandered away the contents of the store-house ; that when he had found his position to have become irretrievable, he had gone and drowned himself. These reports did not fail to reach the ears of the Nawab. He caused the provisions to be weighed, the cash to be counted, and the accounts to be examined. It was found that a handsome balance was due to the Guru. This confounded the people. " Why then has he gone ? Where has he gone ? " Such questions were on everybody's lips, but there was none who could answer them.

As Bhai Gurdas States it.

Well, where had he gone ? Not an easy matter for the like of us to comprehend or explain. The earliest record of the event is found in the poetical works of Bhai Gurdas. This great Sikh savant was initiated into the Faith by Guru Amardas, the third Guru. He had thus ample opportunities of meeting many Sikhs who had seen Guru Nanak and had lived with him. We also know that Bhai Gurdas presented his compositions to Guru Arjan Dev who

studied them critically. Guru Arjan Dev pronounced the works of Bhai Gurdas to be a key to the Guru Granth Sahib. So we can take it that whatever is recorded by Bhai Gurdas had the approval of Guru Arjan Dev.

Bhai Gurdas refers to this event in the following words :—

" Penance he did austere beyond measure.
And lucky was he,
For the gracious Hari
Bestowed on him His fullest pleasure.
The Guru then reached the Gracious Lord's Eternal Seat,
Happy and swift,
And got the gift
Of priceless Name and of Humility sweet.
From there he fixed a steady, thoughtful gaze
On the world below ;
What a scene of woe !
He found the earth in dreadful flames, ablaze.
No teacher or guide was there ;
Chaotic dark was everywhere.
The whole creation
In deep agitation
Was raising a piteous, woeful moan,
Crying that a way in the dark be shown.
Donning a dress very oddly made
Forth he went, a path he laid
Of true renunciation :
And with determination
Strong he started a huge campaign
To better the world and end the pain. "

This is then what Bhai Gurdas has recorded about this event. We should bear in mind the fact that this had the approval of Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru.

Puratan Janam Sakhi.

The next record that we have of the Guru's life is what is called the Old Chronicle (*Puratan Janam-sakhi*), written about the year 1635 A.D., in the time of Guru Hargobind. In this chronicle the writer has tried to describe

the events of the spiritual world in the language of this world. He says that as the Guru took a dip in the stream, angels from God bade him follow them. They took him into the presence of God. The Lord extended to him a cordial welcome and offered him a cup of nectar as a mark of His favour. He quaffed it with humble joy. The Guru was then charged with the duty of going forth into the world and showing the right way of life and worship to the fallen and misguided humanity. He was to remain uncontaminated by the world as before, but he was to exert his utmost to bring others on to the path which he had followed so well. In all this work he was promised to be ever blessed with divine grace and help. The Guru is represented to have humbly accepted the duty thus laid on him by his maker. He thanked and praised the Lord and stood mutely enjoying the Blissful Presence of the Lord. He was then conducted back into the waters of the stream. Full three earthly days had passed by then.

Guru Nanak's Divine Song.

Among the Guru's own sacred Songs there is one which is generally believed by the faithful to describe this event. That song may be translated thus :

"A Minstrel out of work was I
To His work He did me apply.
The Mighty Lord to me did say,
'Sing my praises night and day.'
The Master summoned the Minstrel to His Eternal Abode
A robe of Name and eulogy true on me bestowed.
A cup of the Nectar of True Name
By His grace to me there came.
At the bidding of God I took my fill.
It gave me peace which fills me still.
All else can taste it if so they will........."(*Majh ki Var*)

The Blissful State.

Macauliffe writes, "One day after bathing (Guru) Nanak disappeared in the forest, and was taken in a vision to God's presence." Whatever words we may choose, whatever picture we may form for our limited understanding,

the fact remains that for three earthly days Guru Nanak was considered to have been lost or drowned. Listening to the myriad voices of Nature clothed in dawn, with the doleful, piteous moan of humanity ringing in his heart, the call of the Gracious Lord captivating his soul, a sort of charm having overspread his whole being, he went whither the Lord was pleased to draw him. Yes, listening to all these voices and hearkening to the Divine call, he went as far as the thick solitudes where nothing any longer comes to disturb the collected soul. There, away from all, in the eye of the Lord, he sat wrapt in mute adoration. Humanity's doleful cry was in his ears, in his heart and soul, in the form of a dismal song. 'It was the song of the mystic bird. This song said, in marvellous modulations, all that man thinks and feels, all that he suffers, all that he seeks, all that falls short of fulfilment for him.' It summed up for him, in sweet harmonies, the destinies of living beings, the distressed agony of a flaming, passion-ridden world, and appealed to him, in the name of the immense pity that filled his soul, to go forth with his message of hope and liberation, and save the world. The song that rang in the heart, inaudible to the bodily ears, lifted his soul softly on light, strong wings, to the heights where dwells the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and from where the soul can look downwards on the whole creation as on a map spread out. Once in that Blissful presence, Guru Nanak forgot all about earth, sky, and time; he forgot himself.

From this happy state Guru Nanak returned when the Lord bade him. He went to the house where he used to take rest and lodge his disciples, guests, and friends. All who saw him found that he was a changed man. He opened wide the doors and invited the poor to take away all that was there. To those who hesitated he himself handed over the articles that he found in the house.

A Man Possessed?

The news spread in the city. A large crowd of spectators assembled at the place. Nawab Daulat Khan also came. He enquired from Guru Nanak what had happened to him. But the Guru heard nothing and said nothing. He seemed to be in a strange intoxication, to be like a man possessed. People said that some evil spirit had possessed him The Nawab shook his head in great sorrow and went away.

The call had come. Having given away all his material wealth to the poor, he was now ready to distribute, with an equally liberal and generous heart, the spiritual riches that he had received from his Lord. He went out in the wilderness. Mardana alone accompanied him with his rebeck.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RESPONSE

His Sister's Unfailing Faith.

Even when Guru Nanak was generally believed to have been drowned, his sister, Bebe Nanki, had kept alive her faith in the divine nature of her brother. "Rivers can't drown him," she had said. Now, too, when all proclaimed that some evil spirit had come to possess her brother, who in consequence, had given away to the poor all that he had in the rest-house and would speak to none, her heart did not droop, her faith did not waver. "What evil spirit can possess him?" said she. "He has come to drive away the spirit of evil that possesses mankind."

The Exorcism.

Some well-meaning, simple folk took a *Mulla* or Muslim priest to the place where Guru Nanak was sitting. The Mulla began to utter some spells and write down some holy words on a paper. This paper was to form an amulet which was to be hung round Guru Nanak's neck. The Guru smiled and sang :—

> "Cursed are the lives of those
> Who write and sell the Name of God."
>
> [*Var Sarang. Shlok* 20 (1)]

The *Mulla* heeded not the Guru's objurgation, but continued uttering his incantations and writing out his charm. Having finished what he thought was necessary for the exorcism, he addressed the evil spirit which was supposed to have possessed the Guru and said, "Who art thou ?" This was the usual question for such times. The *Mulla* believed that the spirit would speak, disclose his identity, and be

prevailed upon to quit the sufferer. But he had a strange patient this time to deal with. The Guru replied,

"Some do call me an evil sprite,
Others in me do a demon descry,
Some declare me a luckless wight,
But Nanak the humble am I.'
[*Rag Maru Shlok* 7 (1)]

Mad?

The *Mulla* was convinced that no evil spirit possessed the Master. He made ready to retire. Others near him then said that perhaps Guru Nanak had become mad. Thereupon the Guru made a sign to Mardana to play the rebeck and sang a song which may be translated thus:—

"Mad is Nanak gone, O totally mad
But mad is he for the Bounteous Dad.
None save God doth he heed or know,
To none save Him doth allegiance show.
Only then may one truly mad be known,
When from fear of God hath his madness grown.
Only then is he mad in sooth, O brother,
When he doth one thing aud doth no other—
Findeth his Master's Order and Will
And obeyeth Him steadily, cheerfully still.
The Will of God with him doth e'er prevail,
Wisdom of every sort he deemeth of little avail.
Then is a man truly mad, O friend
His Love doth God to him extend.
Unworthy and low doth he himself deem
And holdeth all else in high esteem.
Mad of this type hath Nanak grown
For the sake of Him do let him alone." (*Rag Maru*)

"No Hindu no Muhammadan."

This silenced the *Mulla* and the rest. They were convinced that Guru Nanak was possessed with the spirit of God, and had become a true faqir. All bowed and went away. For the whole of that day and the following night the Guru sat as in a trance. He neither spoke nor moved. On

the following day he came to himself. The first words that he then uttered were, "There is no Hindu, there is no Muhammadan." Soon the words were on everybody's lips. The Hindus had really ceased to be true Hindus. Moreover, they had become too deeply demoralized to resent or heed such sayings as that of the Guru. The Muhammadans, however, were at the height of power. They were the rulers. Their religion was spreading everywhere. How could a Hindu dare say in the Muslim raj that no Muhammadan was in the land. The Qazi took the words to the Nawab and complained to him that Guru Nanak was casting a great slur on the whole Muhammadan community. Although the Nawab had come to believe that Guru Nanak was a true lover of God and incapable of injuring any one's feelings, yet the Qazi had his way. The Nawab sent for Guru Nanak. The latter refused to obey the summons. "My Master," said he, "does not permit me to obey any man any more. I must obey my Lord." Thereupon, the Nawab sent another messenger who said with great humility, "The Nawab beseeches you in the name of your Lord God to favour him with your sight. He does not command as a Governor but entreats as a humble admirer of yours."

A call made in the name of God Guru Nanak could not resist. He got up and went into the presence of the Nawab. The latter received him with great respect and expressed his sorrow at having lost such a honest *Modi*. The Guru smiled and said, "There is no Hindu; there is no Muhammadan." Upon this the Qazi said, "About Hindus I would say nothing. There may or may not be any true Hindus in this land. But how can you say that there is no Muhammadan? There are millions of true followers of the Prophet."

The Guru then made a sign to Mardana to play the rebeck and sang a song which may be translated thus:—

Admonitions to Qazi:—The True Muslim.

"To be worthy of being called a Muhammadan is difficult. One should, in the first place, acquire the virtues and qualities of a Muhammadan and then should he boast of being a follower of the Prophet. Let him first truly love the religion preached by men of God and rid himself of vanity and pride of pelf. Resigning himself to God, let him become lowly and humble. Let him put aside the fear of birth and death. Let him joyfully accept the Will of God. Let him believe God to be all in all. Let him quell all thoughts of self. Let him be kind and merciful to all living beings. When a man does all this, and not before, can he be called a true Muhammadan." [*Var Majh, Shlok* 8 (1)].

The Qazi was not yet satisfied. He put some more questions. As Mardana played the rebeck, the Guru sang as follows :—

"Make mercy thy mosque. Let faith and sincerity be thy prayer-carpet, and what is just and lawful thy holy book. Let humility be thy circumcision, sweetness of behaviour thy fasting; thus shalt thou a true Muhammadan be. Let virtuous deeds be thy Ka'aba; Truth thy spiritual guide; charity thy creed and prayer: and quiet, unruffled temperament thy rosary. Do all this, my friend, and God will bestow honour on thee." [*Var Majh, Shlok* 7 (1)].

The Forbidden Acts and Things.

"Listen further! Let all fully realize that what belongs by right to others should be shunned by Muhammadans as they shun pork and by Hindus as they shun beef, the two things forbidden most peremptorily by their religions. Be sure that only then will the spiritual guides of both Hindus and Muslims intercede for their followers when the latter do not eat what is thus forbidden, when they cease to usurp other people's rights and things, when they cease to coerce

others into their faith and views. Mere talk, lip professions, and idle observances will not take thee to Paradise. It is rather by the practice of Truth in thy daily life that thou canst gain emancipation. Whatever is forbidden thee as food cannot become permissible by being spiced. Idle words and pious professions, divorced from right and virtuous conduct, are verily like the spice by which people try to legalize what is unlawful. But all in vain, my friend. False, hypocritical professions can beget falsehood only. No amount of them can make falsehood become truth, just as no amount of spice can make the forbidden food become permissible. So give up mere lip-professions and all vain, deceptive show, and engage thyself in virtuous deeds. [*Var Majh*, *Shlok* 7 (2)].

Five Prayers.

"You people have five prayers which are said at five different times in the day and are called by five different names. Listen. I tell you what the five prayers should really be. Unalloyed truth should be the first one. Acquisition permitted by law, religion, and morality should be the second; charity to all in the name of God should be the third; good intentions and a pure heart should be the fourth; and the praise and glorification of God the fifth. Let good and virtuous acts be thy *Kalma* or the creed to be ever repeated. Do all this, my friend. Then alone canst thou be worthy to be called a Muhammadan. Otherwise, by the practice of falsehood and deceit, only false things can be had and not the true religion." [*Var Majh*, shlok 7 (3)]

The Effects of His Words.

The admonition went home. They all realized the truth of the Guru's words. They recollected how the Muhammadans had everywhere forcibly snatched away other people's goods and were even then doing so all around them. They realized that, with most of them, religion had come to mean

a mere mechanical repetition of little understood Arabic text, the observance of certain forms and ceremonies, fasting during the prescribed month, and hating their Hindu neighbours; that religion had ceased to inspire goodly, human virtues in the Muhammadans, was engendering inhuman and irreligious vices, sins, and crimes, and was inciting them to the murder and oppression of the Hindus. Those who heard the Guru's narration of the qualities which should distinguish a true Muhammadan felt all this and more. They were struck at the daring of the Guru in having uttered these truths at the court of a Muhammadan ruler and in the presence of a large gathering of fanatic Muslims of those dark days. But the sweet humility of the Guru had disarmed all opposition. There was a force in the look of his eyes that overcame and suppressed all words of protest as they took shape in the hearts of the Muslim hearers. All of them bowed in deep reverence.

In the Mosque to Pray.

It was the time for the afternoon prayer. As the company was about to proceed to the mosque, the Qazi said to the Guru, "You have instructed us what we should do to become true Muhammadans. You have told us how we should pray. We are now going to say our prayers. Will you go with us and join us?"

"By all means," said the Guru. All went to the mosque. The Qazi stood at the head of the gathering and began to repeat the Arabic text and perform the prescribed bodily movements. Others imitated him in these latter. The Guru looked at the Qazi, who appeared to be devoutly engaged in prayer, and laughed. Another act of great daring —to laugh at a Qazi at prayers in a mosque. The Qazi's face changed not a little. When the prayer was over, he complained to the Nawab that Guru Nanak had insulted

the whole assembly, nay the Muhammadan religion, to boot. The Nawab was of a generous temperament. He approached the Guru and said, "Good Sir, you promised to join us in prayers, but instead, you laughed at the Qazi as he was engaged in them."

The Qazi Confounded.

"Yes," replied Guru Nanak, "I did promise to join him at prayers. But he was not praying at all. While with his tongue he was repeating the text and with his body was performing the prescribed movements, he himself was chasing his new born colt which he had left untethered at home and was trying to save it from falling in the deep pit in his courtyard. I could not join him at that. It was amusing to see him thus, his body at prayers and he at home running after the colt. So I laughed. How we deceive ourselves and the world, and try to deceive God Himself!"

The Qazi lowered his head. Guru Nanak had read his mind. But then taking courage, he said, "But here was the Nawab than whom no devouter Muhammadan exists hereabouts. You could have joined him."

The Nawab Enters the Path.

"No doubt," replied the Guru, "the Nawab is a good man; but he, too, was not engaged in prayers. He was purchasing horses at Kabul. All others who imitated your movements were, likewise, not here at prayers. They were far off, each attending to his own affairs. Such prayers are worse than useless. They engender pride, vanity, and intolerance. I could not have joined you at such prayers."*

* There was a time when people with Western education would not believe that Guru Nanak could have thus read the thoughts of the Qazi and the Nawab. But now, when from the West itself have come the sciences of thought reading, television, clairvoyance, etc., that scepticism is giving way to an intelligent faith in such happenings in the world of the spirit. For a more detailed note on such phenomena the reader is invited to turn to Appendix B and to the books suggested there.

Saying this the Guru rose to go away. The Nawab reverently touched his feet and said, "O true faqir, accepted of God, stay here. All this authority and all this estate, I lay at your feet. Accept them. Be my Master; let me be thy slave for ever. Don't go away."*

"No friend," replied the Guru with half-shut eyes, "The Great Commander calls me. I must go forth and engage in His service. Duty calls me to distant lands. Keep thy authority and estate; but also keep the love of God and man in thy breast. Then shalt thou be surely saved."

The Nawab bent his head in reverence and said, "As you please. But do kindly accept for the use of your family the sum that has been found due to you from the *Modikhana*?"

The Guru desired him to distribute the amount among the poor. "As for my family and myself, the Sustainer of all will provide for us."

Renunciation.

Saying this, the Guru rose and repaired to the same secluded place from where he had come to the court when entreated in the name of God. Many holy men of both communities followed him there and stayed with him. Every day people gathered round him to obtain light and instruction. Many were blessed by the Master with the priceless gift of the True Name, of a life of love and service practised in the name of God.

It was during this period, when the Guru had given up his home and work, and was staying outside Sultanpur, that his second son, Lakhmi Das, was born.

His Relatives' Protest.

The news of Guru Nanak having renounced the world reached his and his wife's parents. They were greatly perturbed. They came to Sultanpur. A learned Pandit was with them. He tried to dissuade Guru

* Bhai Gurdas has given a list of the more prominent Sikhs of Guru Nanak's time. Nawab Daulat Khan is one of them.

Nanak from the path of renunciation which he had entered upon. He advised him, on the authority of the *Vedas* and *Shastras*, to worship God in the usual Hindu way and to look after his family. His father Mehta Kalu said, "We are old now. It is your duty to serve us in our old age." His father-in-law, Baba Mul Chand, said, "You are a husband and father. It is your duty to look after your family, to bring up and educate your sons, to do for them what your father did for you. If you were thus to desert your wife and children, you should not have married." His wife clasped his feet, washed them with tears, and said, "Who is mine in this world but thee, O Lord of life? In whose care dost thou leave me and these thy sons? Have pity on them if not on me."

His sister, Bebe Nanki, stood quiet. In her eyes were tears of sorrow at the imminent separation from her beloved brother and Guru, and on her face was a deep calm, born of a willing resignation to the will of the Master. She liked him to stay, but she would not stand in the way of his resolve.

His Reply to His Parents.

The Guru heard all that his friends and relatives had to say. He then looked up and said, "Sir, I admit that my duty is to serve my father. But there is the Father above who is the father of all. He bids me go abroad and cool and soothe the flaming, distressed world. The Divine call is too strong and urgent for me to resist. He who sends me thus on His own mission will be your stay in your old age. Rely on Him, permit me to go, and bless me with your prayers that I may prosper in my undertaking."

The words of the Guru and the look of his eyes had their effect. His parents, under some mysterious influence, and even against their deep desires, said "All right" and stepped back.

The Guru then turned to Baba Mul Chand, his father-in-law, and said, "It is not man that brings forth children into the world. They are sent hither by the Creator and Sustainer of the world. We are here to carry out His divine plan. Have no anxiety for thy daughter and thy grand-children. God, whose children they are, will take care of them. I am called forth to serve and save God's children in other places. The whole wide world, the offspring of my Father above, is henceforth my family. I must do my duty that way now. Don't grieve, but extend thy blessings to me."

To His Father-in-Law.

Baba Mul Chand and his wife, Mata Chando Rani, were reconciled to the will of their son-in-law.

The Guru then turned to his wife, and said, "Take heart, O favoured daughter of the Eternal Father. My duty here is ended. He who bids me leave thee and my dear sons will look after you all. Great is thy love, great has been thy devotion, and great is to be thy sacrifice, but be sure that greater still will be the reward which the Lord will bestow on thee. May He ever abide with thee and thy sons. I must go to save my Father's sons and daughters from sin and sufferings. Bid me a cheerful adieu."

To His wife.

She felt resigned to her lord's will. Her head bent low and the Master's hand blessed it.

The Guru then turned to his sister and said, "My respected sister, thy love is different from that of all others. It is of a higher type. I read thy mind in thy looks. Have no anxiety. God will be ever with thee. I, too, shall be ever with thee. Whenever thy love for me rouses in thee an unsuppressible longing to see me, I shall hear thy unuttered summons and

To His Sister.

shall come to thee.* But, all the same, try to calm thy beating, loveful heart. Think of the Lord alone. I know my duty towards thee. But innumerable sisters in woe and agony are crying to be comforted. I must go."

The Guru then look up his sons in his arms, in turn, pressed them to his breast and lips, smiled on them his gracious smile, and then handed them back to their mother. He then lovingly passed his hand over their heads and faces and blessed them. After that he bade farewell to all his relatives. They went away.

The news that Guru Nanak was about to set on travels soon spread in the city. All his disciples and admirers came to take his blessings. The Nawab also came among them. The Guru blessed them all with the gift of True Name, instructed them in the fundamentals of his faith, and bade them return to their places and lead virtuous, useful lives.

* It is recorded in the *Janamsakhis* of the Guru that whenever his sister implored him for a visit, however far off he might be at the time, he came to her the very instant, stayed with her for a short time, and then went back as mysteriously as he had come. To many modern minds stuffed with the eighteenth or early nineteenth century scepticism, which was the first reaction of the human mind to the impact of scientific thought and discovery, such statements will appear impossible and against Nature. To convince himself that such things, seemingly impossible and certainly inexplicable at present, do actually happen the reader is invited to study Appendix B and follow up the subject as suggested there.

CHAPTER IX

EXALTS THE LOWLY

Prophecy about Goindwal.

A little time after, the Guru resolved to go on his extensive tours. He finally took leave of his sister, wife, and sons, and set out with Mardana as his companion. Crossing the river Beas, he came to the place where now stands the town of Goindwal. It was a wide wilderness then. Sitting on the river's bank, the Guru meditated on Nature and her indwelling Lord. His soul was attuned to the celestial music that was, inaudibly to the ears, filling the earth and the sky. Beside him Mardana was playing his rebeck and singing the Master's songs in marvellous modulation. On light, strong wings the Guru's soul rose to the feet of the Blissful Lord and held them fast. For two days the Guru sat thus with his eyes closed, and his countenance glowing with a calm, radiant glory.

Mardana sat near him. He was feeling hungry. He laid aside his rebeck. He looked all round for any sign of a habitation nearby or of a chance traveller. None was there. He was getting impatient. When the Guru came to himself, Mardana said to him, "Master, either bless me with a little of thy power of enjoying the Lord's company in complete disregard of the bodily needs, or please to choose thy way through inhabited zones; otherwise this poor *Mirasi*, whom thou hast taken out of the very dregs of society and made a *Bhai* or brother of thine, will some day lie a corpse in some jungle. Who will then sing to thee thy ambrosial, delicious songs? What attraction dost thou find in this wilderness that thou

hast sat here for the last two days, unmindful of the needs of thy body, and of the cravings of thy weak companion?"

Guru Nanak smiled and said, "This place has been blessed by the Lord. A great one will erect here a Temple whence he will bestow on all at all hours food for both the body and the spirit.* As for thee and me let us learn to look to God."

At that time a Zimindar came, 'by chance' as some will say; persuaded by the Provident Lord as Guru Nanak said; under subtle influence of the thought waves sent forth by the Guru as the modernists would assert. The Zimindar gave them food for the body. In exchange he got the priceless food for the soul—a food which could never surfeit or exhaust.

Visits the Present Site of Amritsar.

From there the two started on their way. What way? That which the Guru's feet took under the Lord's direction. At all places that they visited the Guru weaned people from irreligion or Godless religion and put them on to the right path. The next day they reached a pool of clear water in the vicinity of Sultanwind. Here, sitting on its bank, under a shady *Ber* tree the Guru sang the Lord's praises. When re-starting, the Guru said, "Here shall another great one build a Temple of Hari whence divine, nourishing food of the spirit will be distributed freely at all hours." That pool is the site of the sacred tank of Amritsar—the Lake of Nectar—in the midst of which stands the Golden Temple. On the bank of the Lake the old *Ber* tree under which the Guru sat still exists. It is called the *Dukhbhanjani Ber* or the Tree that Destroyeth all sorrow and suffering.

* At the place Guru Amar Das, the third Guru, dug a *baoli* or well with steps reaching to the surface of water, and made the place his residence. He started here a *Langar* or free kitchen where all were fed at all hours.

Reaches Syedpur.

Travelling in this way, halting in several places as his mood directed him, and everywhere knitting people to the feet of the Almighty Father, and laying in every place, the foundation of the Holy Fellowship which he had come to found, the Guru reached Lahore. During his stay there he continued delivering to all, in his own sweet, friendly way, his divine message of Love and Service. People in large numbers heard him and became his disciples. After a few weeks' stay at Lahore the Guru started from there and reached Syedpur, now called Eminabad, in the district of Gujranwala. He went to the house of a low caste artisan, Lalo by name. This Lalo was a God-fearing man who lived by the sweat of his brow. Such people were dear to Guru Nanak. He would go miles and miles to see such a one.

Welcomed by Bhai Lalo.

Bhai Lalo joyfully received the holy guest. One look on the countenance of Guru Nanak radiant with divine glory was enough to convince Bhai Lalo that his devotion to the Lord was about to bear fruit. The saviour had come who would rekindle his soul with a divine spark, make him reborn into a life of the spirit, bestow on him the gift of true Devotion, and ultimately make him one with the Lord. At the approach of the guests, Bhai Lalo left his tools and rose to welcome them. He took them into his humble cottage, seated the Guru on a little cot—the only one that he had—, and began to cook food in a regular cooking square. Mardana was surprised at the Guru's choice of a host. There were in the city several men of wealth and position who would have gladly welcomed him and feasted him in grand mansions. He had halted at the hut of a poor man who had only one cot and had no wife or cook. What sort of food could the artisan prepare ?

The Guru read Bhai Mardana's thoughts. He was amused. With his face beaming with a smile of love, the Guru said, "Brother, don't be puzzled. I have chosen a holy one as my host. Holy is the man who loves the Lord and earns his food by honest labour. This place is holy and far more comfortable than the spacious abodes of the rich parasites who live on other people's earnings."

The Cooking Square.

Bhai Lalo had, by then, cooked the food—simple, coarse bread and *sag*, or green pot-herbs boiled and salted. He begged the Guru to step into the *Chauka* or the cooking square and partake of the humble fare. The Guru replied, "Brother, the whole earth is as good as a cooking square. True and devoted servants of the Lord need not bother about ceremonial purity, for they are ever pure and undefiled. Bring the food here." At the sight of this simple coarse bread Mardana became a little uneasy at first. He thought he would not be able to chew and swallow it. He saw that the Guru was eating it with a cheerful countenance. Mardana also reluctantly put a morsel in his mouth. Lo! the wonder of it! He found that he had tasted nothing so delicious as this coarse bread. As Guru Nanak said, love, truth, and honest labour formed the ingredients of the coarse fare. It could not but be delicious.

After a few days' halt the Guru made ready to go. But Bhai Lalo fell at his feet and prayed him to stay a little longer. Such a loving request the Guru had not the heart to refuse. He agreed to stay. Bhai Mardana begged permission to go and see his people at Talwandi. He was allowed to go.

Opposition and Appreciation.

During his stay at Bhai Lalo's the Guru used to repair to a secluded place where, sitting or lying on a bed of pebbles or sand, he meditated on the Lord.* At nightfall he returned to the

* That place is now the site of a Gurdwara called *Rori Sahib* or the Sacred Pebbles.

house of Bhai Lalo. By and by, the news spread in the city that a Bedi Khatri of Talwandi, who had turned a *Sadhu*, was putting up at the house of a *sudra* and was eating the food cooked by that low-caste man. The high-caste people, Brahmins and Kashatrivas, were scandalized. They named him *Kurahia* or a man who had abandoned the right path and taken to the wrong one. Some learned Brahmins came to counsel him. They hoped to bring him back to the path prescribed in the *Vedas* and *Shastras*. But they had to go back in utter confusion. Their own old faith got a shaking, but they would not give it up. They were making a living by its means. Still, several Hindus and Muhammadans, who heard his divine songs and looked on his gracious, glorious countenance, owned him as their spiritual guide and became his Sikhs. The Hindus began to call him 'Nanak Tapa or Nanak the Hermit'. The Muhammadans called him 'Nanak Shah' or 'Nanak the Divine Faqir.'

Conspiracy of Mullas and Pandits.

In a short time the Guru came to be visited by people from the neighbouring villages. The Guru's message of liberation from all the snares of superstitions, forms, and ceremonies encouraged and enforced by *Pandits* and *Mullas* was heartily welcomed by the people, Hindus and Muslims alike. This perturbed these persons who lived on the religious offerings of the populace. They felt that the Guru was undermining their position as custodians and dispensers of religion and religious knowledge, for he was teaching that everybody could be his own priest and worship God without the intercession of *Pandits* and *Mullas*. They were afraid that their means of livelihood, comfortable and plenteous, would be destroyed. So they jointly conspired to force the Guru to leave the place. They began to poison the ears of Malik Bhago, who was a Khatri by caste and a servile and corrupt official of the local Muhammadan ruler. The Nawab, too, was approached.

Malik Bhago. However, for a time the Guru was not molested. More and more people were coming to listen to his sacred songs and divine, soul-inspiring discourses. At last, something occurred which gave Malik Bhago an excuse to molest the Guru. On account of some happy event in the family, the Malik gave a *Brahmbhoj* or feast in the name of God. The custom was to invite to it all Brahmins and Sadhus who were nearabouts. Guru Nanak was also invited. The Guru declined the invitation. He had no taste, said he, for the sumptuous but blood-tainted articles of diet that would be served at Bhago's.

The Brahmins found their opportunity. They said to the proud and haughty Malik, "So you see! This person, whom people call a hermit and who belongs to a high caste, is really a heretic of the worst type. He ignores the *Varna Dharma*. He dines with a Sudra. He has scornfully declined your invitation. He has scoffed at you. He has said that your dainties are interfused with blood. This is a grave insult, black infamy, and dark heresy. This is too much. He deserves chastisement."

Malik Bhago's pride was hurt. A 'homeless, wandering sadhu' had slighted him. He sent a Brahmin to call the Guru. But the Guru again refused to see the proud official, saying, "What has a faqir to do at the court of an official? We do not know each other. I see no reason why I should go to him." The Brahmin returned and repeated, in an exaggerated form, what the Guru had said. The Malik's wrath was excited. He sent a batch of footmen to bring the Guru into his presence, using force, if necessary. When they disclosed their errand to the Guru, he smiled and said, "All right, friends. The Lord's work has to be done, the sooner the better. Go and tell your master that I am coming to do my duty."

The Guru meets Malik Bhago.

The Malik was waiting for him with impatience. The Guru went and stood calm and quiet. Bhago had been resolving to pounce upon the Guru in wrath. But a look at the Master's countenance sent a strange quiver through his body. The fire in his soul got cooled. He addressed the Guru respectfully. He remonstrated with him for his lodging and dining with low-caste people and his refusing an invitation to a *Brahmbhoj* or a feast given in the name of God by a high-caste Hindu. Above all, he resented the Guru's remarks that the Malik's dainties were interfused with blood.

The Guru heard him out calmly. Then he said, " Misguided brother, to invite all to your feast was certainly your duty and you did that ; but to enforce acceptance of the invitation does not become you. We *Sadhus* eschew delicacies. We eat what the Bounteous Lord sends us in His mercy. As for my remarks about the nature of the food served at your feast, I said what I felt. For fear of no man shall I be kept from speaking out the truth. Dainties and comforts which are had by tyrannizing over the labouring poor are verily interfused with the blood of the unfortunate victims. All your wealth has been extorted mercilessly from the poor toilers of your *Ilaqa*. Enjoyment of this ill-gotten wealth cannot but engender low passions and evil tendencies in the heart and mind, and produce pain and disease in the body. Hence I shunned your feast."

Malik Bhago felt the justice of the Guru's remarks. But his attendants, dependents, and friends were all gathered there. He would not own defeat so easily. So he said, "If the food served by a high-caste man like me you deem to be unfit for you, how can you go on taking every day the food prepared by that Sudra, whose very touch defiles the Twice-born ? His coarse bread doesn't contain milk, does it?"

The Pride of Caste Denounced.

Guru Nanak replied, "O yes, it is interfused with milk and honey. The earnings of a pious man, obtained by the sweat of the brow, are pure; they are sweet and nourishing like milk and honey. They sustain the body and lift the soul. As for thy vaunted high caste, remember :—

" Truly low-caste men are they
Who forget the Lord ;
Without meditation on the Supreme Lord, O Nanak,
Man becomes low and despicable, a mean outcaste. (*Rag Asa*)

" Recognise the Divine Spark which illumines every human form,
Raise no question of caste or tribe ;
For, in the Holy court of the Father above
Exist no distinctions of caste or creed. (*Rag-Asa*)

" Caste and distinctions based on them
Are but the idle inventions of evil brains.
All men, all creatures, are under the protecting shade of the Supreme Lord.
All who deem and call themselves to be great and pure
Will be really so if, in the Court of God, they are found to be worthy of honour. (*Var Sri Rag*)

" My misguided brother, do not pride thyself on thy high caste. Despise no man. God dwells in every heart. The Divine spark, the immortal soul, inspires every human form. All are equally the sons of the Father above. Birth in this or that family cannot exalt or degrade a man. It is actions that do so. A good pious man of humble birth is far more dear to God and men of God than a high-born tyrant or evil doer. Service of mankind, honest labour of the body, does not degrade a man. It elevates him. As for me,

" People who are lowliest among the lowly,
Of a caste that is deemed the lowest of all low castes—
All such are the friends and brothers of Nanak.
What has he to do with the high and great?
Where the lowly are treated with a loving care,
There do rain Thy Mercy and Grace, O Lord." (*Sri Rag*)

The Malik Becomes a Disciple.

The discourse of the Master interspersed with his matchless divine songs went straight to the heart of the hearers.* Malik Bhago was subdued. Scales fell off his eyes and he fell at the Master's feet. A strange thrill entered at his forehead, which touched the feet of the Master, and passed through his whole body. He begged to be forgiven his hideous past. He prayed for life and light. The Guru bade him rise and sin no more. Malik Bhago rose a changed man. There was a new light in his eyes; a joy unknown ever before filled his heart and thrilled his soul. The Guru blessed him with the priceless gift of the Name and a life of love and service The Malik went home, light in body and heart. He distributed all his wealth among the poor. He vowed, thenceforth, to live a life of love, devotion, and service. Bhai Lalo, whom he erstwhile despised as a low-caste man he began to deem his elder brother and dearest friend.

Thus did the Guru lift the lowly unto eminence. Thus did he destroy the pride of caste which was degrading and demoralizing the people. Thus did he lay the foundation of his Holy Fellowship where 'the lowest is equal with the highest in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes.'

A few days after, Mardana returned from Talwandi. He delivered to the Guru the humble request of his old disciple,

*All accounts of the Guru's life say that, at Malik Bhago's insistence, the Guru sent for a coarse bread of Bhai Lalo's and a dainty one from the Malik's kitchen. Taking one in his right and the other in his left hand, the Guru squeezed them both. And lo! from Lalo's bread oozed out milk and from Bhago's bread issued drops of blood. In this way the proud official was convinced that his wealth obtained by fraud and oppression was impure; while the coarse bread of Lalo being a fruit of honest labour was pure.

Rai Bular, that the Guru might be pleased to visit him. "I am old," he had said, "and too weak to go to him. He is kind and gracious. I would I could see him with these eyes; for soon they will close for ever." Other disciples of Talwandi had also sent their entreaties. So, after a short further stay at Syedpur the Guru started towards the place of his birth.

CHAPTER X.

CONVERTS A THUG INTO A MISSIONARY

At Talwandi.

On reaching Talwandi, he took his seat outside the village. His parents heard of his arrival. They went to see him. His uncle, Mehta Lalu, also accompanied them. They once again tried to persuade him to give up the life of renunciation that he had chosen and take to family life and some profitable occupation. The Guru listened to all that they said and then replied, "The whole world is my family now. I have not renounced the world. I have given myself to it. I have chosen a really profitable calling, one which gives me untold riches of peace and happiness both here and hereafter. More. It will be the means of bringing the misguided, impoverished humanity to a realization and enjoyment of the infinite treasures which it can make its own but which it has lost and forgotten. I am an agriculturist as well. The human heart is my field. The Eternal Name and infinite Love are the seeds that I sow. I am a trader, too. I deal in the souls of men. Procuring the precious commodities of Truth, Love, and the Name, from the Bounteous Lord of treasures, I deal them out to those who need them. But I don't throw away my precious goods. I sell them very dear indeed. Those who would have these must hand over their own selves to me. I then knit them on to the feet of the Lord. So try not to dissuade me from such a useful and profitable calling. Rather, bid me prosper in my business."*

*Cf. the Guru's Song translated below :—

"Desirest thou to play the game of love with me ?
Then, come, but thy head on thy palm must be ;
If choosest thou to tread this path, be ready O friend,
To part with thy head, to lay down thy life, in perfect joy and peace."

Words as these made his parents and relatives hold their peace and let Guru Nanak follow his own course. The Guru then got up and went to the house of Rai Bular. The Rai was an old man by then. He rose and was about to fall on the Guru's feet, when the latter held him in his loving arms. The Rai hugged the Guru lovingly to his breast. In that embrace of love the Rai tasted true, lasting joy. He felt himself to be light as air and happy as the bride that has found her lord after a long separation.

The Guru stayed a few days at Talwandi. Disciples and friends of his childhood and youth gathered round him. He enkindled their souls. He awakened them from dreamy sleep of greedy, tenacious worldly life and made them taste the pleasures of an active, wakeful life of the spirit. During daytime he remained with his relatives and friends, chiefly with Rai Bular. At night he would retire into the solitude of the forest where his collected soul enjoyed an unbroken communion with the Lord.

Tour in Southern Punjab.

After a few days he got ready to depart. The divine call, which had lured him from Sultanpur, was urging him on to give up the restful life. He started. Crossing the river Ravi, he travelled southwards through forests and little inhabited tracts. Mardana was with him. Neither hunger nor fatigue seemed to affect the Guru. He seemed to be possessed and drawn by some invisible, irresistible force. He seemed to be in a hurry. Some good bargain was up again. Mardana felt the pangs of hunger and fatigue. He bravely bore them for some time. The fruits that could be picked up or plucked from here and there on the way were not enough to satisfy his body's craving for food. He wanted bread and milk.

By then they had reached the neighbourhood of Harappa. The Guru permitted Mardana to go into the village, assuring

him of a hospitable reception. Mardana went. People treated him with kindness and charity. They feasted him on dainties. They made him offerings of money and clothes. Towards evening, Mardana gathered up the offerings into a bundle and took them to the Guru. When the Guru saw Mardana, with the bundle on his head, he laughed loud and long. "What is it, Mardana ?" asked he. "Clothes and money, Master," replied Mardana. "The good people offered them, to me and I have brought them for you."

The Guru replied, "But these things are of no use to us. We have renounced all worldly wealth and taken to this life. Shall we let ourselves be encumbered again ? Throw them away. Let the poor and needy have these things. He, in whose service we are, will look to our needs. Lovers of God have relish for naught but the True Name. They want nothing else. They feel a constant craving for singing the praises of the Bounteous Lord. His thought sustains them ever. Let faith in Him grow in thy heart. Throw these things away." Mardana obeyed.

At the House of the Thug.

The two started again and soon reached near Talamba in the modern district of Multan. About five or six furlongs from the present railway station of Mukhdumpur on the Khanewal—Shorekot line, there was the habitation of a notorious *thug* named Sajjan. It was a spacious building. On one side of it was a mosque and on the other was a Hindu temple. At the gate stood two servants ever on the look out for guests and wayfarers. They welcomed the Guru and his companion. The radiance born of spiritual grandeur that lit the Guru's countenance was taken by them to be due to a consciousness of great worldly wealth. The two were seated in a cosy, well-furnished room. Sajjan also came there. Greatly imposing were the dress and mien of this imposter. In his left hand he had a rosary like a Hindu Hermit and in

his right a staff like a Muslim faqir. He was glad for he believed that the Guru had with him some priceless gems. All that wealth would be his before daybreak.

With ostensible humility, Sajjan seated himself, at the Guru's feet. He tried to fish out information about the sort of wealth that the Guru had with him. When asked his name, he replied, " I am a friend and humble servant of all. Hindus call me Sajjan Mall and Muslims call me Sheikh Sajjan. But I am neither a Hindu nor a Muhammadan. Rather, I am both."

Servants brought food and drink for the two. The Guru declined to have anything. Sajjan and his accomplices tried all their arts but failed to persuade the Guru to take either food or drink. Mardana, of course, could not eat or drink without his Master's permission. Sajjan then took them to a room where cosy beds were prepared for them. The Guru sat on the floor. Sajjan begged him with folded hands to lie on the bed and take rest for the night. The Guru smiled and said, " No friend, cosy, soft beds are not for us faqirs. I am all right where I am. Duty has to be done. Time for rest is not yet. Go and rest, if you may."

Divine Music.

Sajjan bowed and went away. He assembled his confederates. All thought out ways and means of plundering the Guru's wealth. They did not know that the Guru had come to give armloads of his really precious, peerless wealth to them who were really paupers possessing thousands. It was decided to strangle the two in the small hours of the morning. Sajjan retired to his bedroom. He was yet lying awake, immersed in thought, when he heard sweet music coming from the Guru's room. It charmed him out of his bed. He quietly stole to the door of the Guru's room. He saw that the Guru was sitting with his eyes closed. There was a 'sparkle of innumerable gems on his forehead'. Strange,

quieting, attracting emanations seemed to be radiating from his person. Mardana was playing the rebeck and singing one of the Master's songs. The music and the song and the look on the Guru's face drew him in as if with strong invisible chains. He went quietly in. An atmosphere of soothing calm and attunement filled the room. He bowed partly as a matter of show that was in his nature and partly on account of a mysterious force which he could as little resist as explain or understand.

After a time Mardana stopped singing. The music on the rebeck continued. The Guru then lifted his sweet melodious voice and sang a song which described the characteristics of imposters and criminals like Sajjan. It denounced all show of false piety and skin-deep devoutness as utterly useless, nay as highly baneful. If the heart was impure and given to sin and vice, to evil and corruption, all wealth, all practices, all forms and observances, all worship and charity, proved only as so many snares for the soul. Mansions and palaces, heaps of wealth and riches, were but heavy loads which the soul, maimed and blind, had to carry over steep, thorny, endless paths. People who, forgetful of the life to come, lived on the life-blood of others cruelly sucked, and deceived the world with their hypocrisy, had yet to render an account of all their doings. There, all deeds, committed under the cover of the darkest night or in depths of the deepest dens, would stand before man and arraign him with thousand tongues. The false friends of the world who helped him in his dark deeds, egged him on, and shared with him the short-lived pleasures gained thereby, would desert him then. He alone would suffer for all his deeds. True friends would be those who could be of help and assistance on that occasion, who could lift, in howsoever little a part, the pressing and crushing burden from the tortured soul. Such friends should a man seek and make his own. False relations

of this world, with all their longings, needs, and allurements, simply helped to tighten the strings that bound a man. Constant meditation on God and His attributes, a steady, sincere exertion in the path of Love and Service, association with those who had found their souls, could alone loosen the strings and free the captive soul.*

The Thug Reclaimed.

As the deep-penetrating notes of the moving, divine song followed each other in a sweet cadence, the heart of Sajjan, which had been callous and cruel and devoid of all softer feelings, began to melt in a deep anguish of the soul, to throb in anxiety, to flutter in fear. All his dark deeds stood stark before him. He tightly shut his eyes but they still stared him in the face. A heavy burden as of big countless loads seemed to be pressing on him and crushing his soul. A deep dark abyss appeared to be yawning before him ready to swallow and efface him. He was convinced that the Guru had read, like an open book, his ugly soul and vicious heart. He stood up. With a faltering, unsteady step, and moist, downcast eyes, he approached the Guru and clung to his feet. A thrill passed through his whole frame. A current as of electricity seemed to have entered at his hands and forehead. The burden of his heart and soul was becoming lighter and lighter. He washed the Guru's feet with his tears of repentance and sorrow.

He remained long in that posture. Then the Guru smiled, passed his hand over the back and shoulders of Sajjan, and bade him rise. The touch of the Guru's hand sent another thrill through his body. He had no heart to rise. He wanted to lie for ever at the blissful feet of the Master. So he tarried. The Guru held him by the hand—the hand which

* This is a free rendering of the Guru's Divine song which he sang on this occasion and which is incorporated in the *Guru Granth Sahib* under *Rag Suhi, Ghar 6.*

had administered cups of poison to and cut the throats of innumerable unsuspecting wayfarers lured to this den by the prospect of a night's rest and lodging. Sajjan let go the Guru's feet and sat up with folded hands and streaming eyes. The Guru's song had washed him clean. He was filled with remorse. He begged the Guru to forgive him, to save him, to deliver him from the consequence of his sins. The Guru asked him to confess his past crimes and sins, and vow to abstain from them in future. Sajjan did as bidden. He confessed all the evil deeds that he had done. He vowed to live a virtuous life. He felt relieved. Of his own accord he realized that as long he had with him the wealth procured by murder and deceit, he could not taste true calm or joy. So he distributed all that he had to the needy and the poor. His spacious mansion, where thousands of murders had been committed, with all its dens and snares, he razed to the ground. For himself he built a simple, little hut.

The First Sikh Missionary.

The Guru blessed him with the Name of the Lord. He bade him make his house a *dharmsal*, or a house of worship and devotion, of open-handed charity and active, all-embracing love and service. He instructed him in the fundamentals of his Faith and charged him with the duty of reclaiming others. He bade him earn his living by honest labour, meditate on the Lord every moment of his life, and share his earnings with the needy and poor. Thus would he be a true *sajjan* or friend not only of himself but of all mankind. From a thug or a robber Sajjan became a holy, active servant of God and man, the first Sikh missionary appointed by the Guru for the propagation of his religion. It was thus that Guru Nanak made converts to his faith.

CHAPTER XI

PAKPATAN AND KURKHETAR

Shaikh Brahm.

Leaving Sajjan to follow the path thus shown to him, and charging him with the duty of reclaiming others, the Guru turned towards the east. At Pakpatan, which was then called Ajodhan, he visited the shrine of Shaikh Farid, hoping to meet the then occupant of that *gaddi* whose name was Shah Brahm. He learnt, however, that Shah Brahm or Shaikh Farid II was out in the woods doing severe penance in order to acquire religious merit and obtain a glimpse of the Lord. We have seen that it was the Guru's wont to seek out men who were either engrossed too deeply in vicious pleasures of the world in utter forgetfulness of the higher needs of their souls, or were too much absorbed in painful, misguided attempts at emancipation of their souls, torturing and starving their bodies in hopes of winning salvation, and neglecting altogether their duties as men towards their fellow beings. He would meet them, discuss things with them, throw a light on their inner selves, and give them such an impression of life, of love, of divine beauty and goodness, of moral endeavour and excellence, that all that they had till then regarded as of paramount importance lost all significance, receded into the shade, and they had no longer the will or desire to think, feel, or do, save as he would have them do. Lighting thus a holy flame within their selves, he deciphered them to themselves and set them steady on the path of balanced growth of body, mind, and soul.

His Doubts.

The tale of the severe, voluntary suffering undergone by the Shaikh induced the Guru to find him out and show him the right and glorious way to attain his goal. He met him in the thick of a deep forest, far away from human habitations. On seeing the beaming, glorious countenance of the Guru, the Shaikh took him for a man who, though going about in the dress of a man of religion, cared more for his body than for his soul. So, as soon as mutual greetings were over, Shaikh Brahm said to the Guru, " You are dressed as a hermit, but your body would shame an epicure. This is not as it should be. One should either work for a high position in the world or seek a union with the Lord. To attempt both at once is like putting one's legs in two boats ; it is courting sure destruction. "

The True Path.

The Guru replied, " No friend. It is better to have both the boats ready in a fit condition, and to put one's goods in both ; for who knows which of them may reach the destined shore ? Starve not the body, cripple not the soul. Desert not the world, but renounce not religious life either. Who knows which of them may be acceptable to God ? High position and wealth are not evil in themselves. They are a blessing when used in the service of God through man. They give peace and happiness to those who are low and lacking, and elevate those who use them for the good of humanity. But high position and wealth are a curse when they are employed for the oppression of the weak and the poor. They then bring misery to those who lack them, and degrade and demoralize those who have and misuse them. This *Maya*, this longing for the world, has been here from the very beginning. It is indispensable for a proper performance of the drama which the Lord sets His creatures to play in the world. But one

need not fear this ancient witch. If one keeps alert, one can so elevate or sublimate this longing for the world as to help oneself on the way to the Lord. Besides, this *Maya* will not leave you wherever you may go. It will assail you in diverse beguiling forms. So why flee from it ? Why not use it for a fulfiment of the soul's longing for union with the Infinite ? Why not develop and expand this longing into an active, all-embracing love ? This body is not a vain encumbrance for the soul, to be starved and got rid of, the sooner the better. It is the vehicle of the soul. It is the horse and the soul is the rider. It will not do to ignore or starve the one or the other. Both must be kept in a fit condition if this pilgrimage on this earth is to lead us to the true ideal and goal of humanity. By its means man can raise himself to the feet of the Lord. It is as great a sin to neglect and torture the body as to forget all care for the soul. Both are essential. Use both of them in the service of God. Employ thy body in the loving service of God's creatures, and let thy soul be ever in union with the Lord and direct the body in its path of Love, Service, and Devotion. This is the way that leads to the Lord. "

Shaikh Brahm heard all this in mute admiration. He was convinced and converted. He broke his several days' fast at the bidding of the Guru. For some days more the Guru remained with him and fed his famished soul on Divine Song. When the Guru got ready to move further on, the Shaikh took leave to return to Pakpatan. We shall see that later on the Guru visited him again at that place to see if he was living up to the teachings imparted to him in the woods.

Kurkhetar.

Superstitious Practices.

Travelling eastwards, he reached Kurkhetar or Kurkshetar. He had heard that there was about to be held there a big Hindu fair on the occasion of solar eclipse. He knew the superstitious

practices that were current among Hindus. He knew how on such occasions the simple, ignorant people were duped by Brahmins. He resolved to go there and wean them from such senseless practices and bring them on the right path.

Reaching there, he sat beside a lake. People were busy in bathing and giving alms to Brahmins. They hoped thereby to clean themselves of their sins and to rescue the Sun-god from the clutches of demons; for they had been taught by the priests to believe that solar eclipse was caused by demons—Rahu and Ketu—taking the sun in their grip. The Guru watched these deluded, misguided people and smiled. He bade Mardana play the rebeck. The Guru sang one of his sweet, soul-stirring Songs. Very few heard him; for all were busy in washing off their sins and rescuing the Sun-god.

At that time a queen and her son came along. The radiance on the Guru's face charmed them. They bowed and offered him the only thing that they could offer—a deer that the prince had shot on the way. They prayed that the Guru might intercede for them and pray for the restoration of their kingdom which had been usurped by another. The Guru said, "All is in God's hands. Remember Him and live in contentment under whatever condition He is pleased to ordain. I am sure that your love and devotion may win His pleasure and get you back what you have lost."

The Devout Hindus scandalized.

At the Guru's instructions the deer was cut up and set to boil in a big vessel. The smoke of the fire attracted the notice of the Brahmins and the rest. They had a superstition that to light a fire and cook anything during the solar eclipse were acts of sacrilege. They were beside themselves with rage. They hurried to the spot. When they learnt that of all things it was meat that was on the fire, they yelled all the louder. Some said that he was a great sinner, some called him an irreligious atheist intent

upon violating established usage, others considered him to be a man of low birth who was trying to spoil the sanctity of the place and occasion by his irreligious act. They were all furious. They forgot their own acts of worship and charity. All yelled with rage. They swarmed round the Guru. They threatened him, abused him, jeered and swore at him. The Guru sat calm and unperturbed. As they approached him a smile of benevolent pity at their foolish behaviour overspread his countenance. When they saw that winsome smile on that calm, God-lit face, their heated brains began to cool, their wrath-agitated hearts began to throb less violently. Soon, all thoughts of violence left them. They came near him and began to question him about his queer conduct. They were not yet quite free from agitation. The Guru invited them to sit and discuss the matter calmly. They sat down around him. At their head was Pandit Nanu, who was very proud of his learning. He started a discussion on the question of meat eating. The Guru replied to Nanu's questions in a Divine Song which may be freely rendered as follows :—

The Divine Discourse on Meat.

" Your scruples against meat are based on a misconception. While you are too ready to wrangle about meat, you really do not know what meat is, how it differs from vegetables, and in what lies sin and evil. Man is like all other animals in having a body of flesh. It is in flesh and from flesh that it comes into being. For nine months it is nourished in flesh. After birth man sucks flesh for milk. On growing to manhood he marries and brings home a bundle of flesh. He derives enjoyment from that bundle of flesh, his wife, and produces children who are again but so many pieces of flesh. So flesh in itself is not a contemptible thing. If it is evil to take meat, well what will you say of your rishis and gods of old who used to kill animals and perform reli-

gious ceremonies therewith? How then can you take objection against my cooking meat on an occasion of religious sanctity? In your *Vedas* and *Shastras* meat is mentioned quite often and is not forbidden. How then can you defend your fanaticism against meat?

"The truth is that though you call yourself clever and learned persons, yet, in reality, you are wholly devoid of true wisdom and knowledge. As I said before, your scruples against meat are due to a misconception. Let us consider the matter from another point of view. Man is like all other animals in having a body which needs food, and sustenance; but he is higher than the rest in having a greatly developed mind and intellect. It is open to man to direct his mind towards the Source of all Life, Light, and Happiness, to sublimate his passions and instincts, acquire qualities that can raise him to the level of gods, and thereby attain to a life of real power and bliss. In that state he raises no idle questions about animal or vegetable diet. He does not live to eat but eats to live. He uses his God-given sense of discrimination and avoids such articles of food and clothing as are likely to sow in the mind seeds of pride, arrogance, and evil and vicious thoughts and tendencies, or as are prone to produce disease and suffering in the body. He lives in constant contemplation of God. He finds Him, and hence loves and serves Him, in His Creation.

"On the other hand, it is open to man to let his mind get more and more entangled in the meshes of animal cravings. He then runs about like a wild beast. He lives to eat. His mind goes dancing about after objects of sensual pleasure. He becomes spiritually dead. He eats and drinks as his degraded animal nature prompts him. He suffers and dies, not as a man, but as the wreck of a man.

"Then there are others who cultivate their intellect in order to indulge in vain controversies, dry philosophies, and

blind superstitions. They do not direct their thoughts to God. They can never taste true life of the spirit. Look at yourself. You believe that by bathing and giving alms and charity to Brahmins a man can wash his sins away and rescue the Sun-god from the clutches of some imaginary demons. What an idle occupation! What a silly thought! Your hearts are impure as ever, how can bathing wash your sins? The sun is at a huge distance. How can people of this planet help him with their offerings to Brahmins? Eclipse is a natural phenomenon. Brahmins have made it a means of duping and deceiving people and relieving them of their substance. A strange religion! A strange piety! You boast of your abstension from meat and count it an act of great merit and piety, but you never think of eradicating the evils which defile your mind and heart. You think it a sin to eat flesh but you think it no sin to suck other people's blood, to snatch other people's rights, to commit adultery and a thousand other black and evil deeds. You believe that those who take meat are sinners; yet you accept gifts from those very sinners and deceive yourself by the thought that your avoidance of meat will save you from going to hell where your benefactors are doomed to go. Isn't it a queer philosophy?

" Give up these idle controversies. Think ever of the true Lord who is the source of all life and power, of all peace and happiness. Cultivate the nobler and higher powers and qualities; employ them in the service of God through man; control your thoughts from wandering in sinful channels; direct them to the Source of all knowledge. Do not suppress and kill your natural animal cravings for love, life, and sustenance. Rather elevate them and harness them to the service of God and man. Do not torture and disable your body. It is the vehicle of the soul. Keep it strong and healthy. Use it in the path of righteousness. You will come to enjoy true life of the spirit. You will perceive God pervading

everywhere. You will be one with that Source of all life, light, love, and power. You will cease to be dry, dead, and weak. Unbounded Love, Light, and Power will outflow from you and help and raise mankind. So think of Him." *

At the conclusion of this discourse all, Nānu and the rest, bowed in deep reverence and accepted the Guru as their Master. He instructed them in the fundamentals of his faith. The place where the Guru sat and discoursed became the site of a Gurdwara or a House of the Lord whence the Guru's teachings have been imparted to all who would come for them.

* *Malar di Var.*

CHAPTER XII

AT HARDWAR

On the Way.

From Kurkhetar the Guru started towards Hardwar. Wherever he went, he awoke people from a deep slumber of untruth and of clinging to the false, trivial, transitory attractions of the world. He taught them to live ever in God, in thought, word, and deed. He made them give up vain ceremonious worship which affected and melted not the heart, awakened not the soul, and quickened not the life-blood into a ceaseless yearning for Truth, Love, and Service. Thenceforth they lived as servants of God and brothers of mankind, earning their livelihood by the sweat of their brow, sharing the fruit of their labour with the needy and poor, and ever living in tune with the Timeless, Immortal Lord.

People Throw Water to Their Ancestors.

At Hardwar the Guru found the people engaged in idle practices born of blind superstition and dark ignorance. They were washing their bodies in the cold water of the Ganges and were repeating the name of Hari with their lips, but their thoughts were elsewhere, their hearts were impure, their souls were asleep. They were throwing water towards the sun. The Guru knew the superstition which made them do so. He resolved to make them realize the folly and futility of what they were doing. He tucked up his garments, stepped into the water, and, making a cup of his two hands, began to throw water towards the west. All who saw him were struck with amazement. Never before had any pilgrim thrown water to the west,

for the God of the Hindus was believed to dwell in the east. A big crowd gathered round him. A hundred questions were flung at him at once. "Who are you ? Are you a Hindu ? Then why throw water to the west in the direction of Mecca ? Are you a Muhammadan ? Then why of all places have you come here ? Who are you ?"

The Guru smiled and said, "Patience, friends; have patience. May I know why you throw water to the east ?"

The Hindu pilgrims replied, "We are offering water to the thirsty manes of our ancestors."

Guru Nanak, "Where are they ? How far are they ?"

The pilgrims, "They are millions of miles away in some other world."

The Guru Waters His Fields.

Guru Nanak, "Not on this earth even ? That is good. Thank you." Saying this he began to throw water to the west with renewed vigour. A smile of satisfaction was on his face. The people pressed him for an answer to their questions. He replied, "Wait friends. Let me water my fields. They are withering for want of rain. I shall reply all your questions, by and by."

"But where are your fields ?"

Guru Nanak, "Why ! On this very earth, a few hundred miles away. Let me carry on." He began again.

Some people thought that he was mad. Some wondered that such simple folk could be found in that sixteenth century. One of them advised the Guru to desist from his vain toil, for the water thrown by him was, as he saw, again falling into the river. How could it irrigate his fields which lay far away ?

The Guru stood erect and said, "Do you say so ? If water thrown by me cannot reach my crops which are on this very

earth, how can water thrown by you reach your ancestors in another, far off, unknown world ?"

The Enlightenment.

This simple question startled the people. The thought had never occurred to them. Scales seemed to fall off from their eyes. They realized how they had been duped and looted by the Brahmins. They were convinced of the utter folly of what they had been taught to do by the custodians and dispensers of religious knowledge. They begged the Guru to instruct them in the fundamentals of his faith. He told them that all forms and ceremonies, without a true living faith, were worse than useless. They could not take the soul to the feet of the Lord where alone could true happiness be obtained. What was the good of bathing in the holy waters or of counting the beads when the hearts and minds wandered all the time after impure, mundane affairs ? One should live in a constant, unwavering consciousness of the presence of God and do all acts as if in His watchful gaze. If all lived thus, they could do evil to none, they could commit no sin, they could not get entangled in idle meaningless ceremonials. The Guru gave them the priceless gift of the True Name, awoke them to a true life of the spirit, and knit their souls to the feet of the Timeless, Immortal Lord.*

Against Ceremonial Purity.

The people dispersed. The Brahmins and Sadhus who were near the Guru were later scandalized to see that the Guru did not observe the rules of ceremonial purity. Not only did he prepare and take his food without having a

* Some writers believe that this incident happened later, after the Guru had settled at Kartarpur and begun to sow crops there, but it fits here better in his tours ; for, after his settlement at Kartarpur, he is generally believed to have made only one tour in which he visited Achal Batala and Multan. Moreover, for the lesson that he wanted to impress upon the people's mind, it was not essential that he should really have crops towards which he could throw water.

proper cooking square, but he also ate the food that was offered to him by any of the common people, no matter of what caste they were. The Brahmins and Sadhus came to him and scolded him for ignoring the rules of purity laid down in the *Shastras*. "What purity?" asked the Guru "What rules? My body is cleaner than yours. It is not besmeared with dust and ashes as yours in some cases. My clothes are cleaner than yours or than those of the people whom you consider to be pure. The people who bring me food are also clean. How do I break the rules of real purity? Give up, friends, these false notions of ceremonial purity. Purify the spirit within you, and keep your bodies clean. Then none in the world can defile you. No human touch will pollute your body or food."

The Guru then sang,

"Strange notions of purity these, O Pandit,
Having besmeared a place with dung, thou drawest a line all round it,
And callest it thy cooking square
Thou then sittest within, false and impure in mind and heart
Yet, with all this impurity defiling thee, thou criest aloud,
'O touch it not, approach it not,
Or this food of mine will get polluted
Knowest thou not that thy body is defiled already by thy foul deeds?
And more!
Thy heart is impure
What use then thy rinsing thy mouth?
Nanak saith that we should worship truth
If we are pure in mind, body, and heart, we shall certainly attain a union with the True Lord" (*Asa di Var*)

The Brahmins and Sadhus who heard this song needed to hear no more. They bowed and sought his instruction. He blessed them with a true life of the spirit, a life spent in the worship of God and in the love and service of man.

A Brahmin's Wrath.

The next morning, the Guru saw that a Brahmin with a large sacrificial mark on his forehead, the triple thread round his neck, and a loin-cloth alone round his body, was cooking the food inside a cooking square. The Guru saw that here was another of his misguided countrymen entangled in the meshes of the pride of caste and the superstition of ceremonial purity. He resolved to deliver him from this bondage of the heart and mind. The fortress of superstition and the pride of caste had to be broken, and the captive soul set free to walk the path of love, service, and devotion. With a smile on his lips, the Guru stepped quietly into the Brahmin's *chauka* and said, " May I have a piece of live coal to light my fire with ? " The Brahmin began to yell, " You have defiled my cooking square. Who are you ? Get away or I shall strike you with a burning piece of wood."

The Brahmin Enters the Path.

" Be quiet, my friend, " said the Guru, " I only want a little fire. You are a man of religion. Charity and service of others must be dear to you. That is the central teaching of all religions. Why this niggardliness ? Human touch does not defile a man or his food. "

" Do you mean, " said the angry Brahmin, " that I should allow even the low-caste men to enter my cooking square for, as you say, their touch will not defile me and my food ? Should I lose my caste and religion for other people's sake ? "

" Are you sure, " replied the Guru, " that you are all alone in your cooking square ? Methinks four foul women of the lowest castes are sitting even now with you. "

" Talk not to me in riddles, " said the Brahmin. " Speak out what you mean. I am all alone here. I would not permit even a man of my own caste to enter my cooking square. What are the four who, as you say, are even now with me ? "

The Guru then sang :—

" Evil-mindedness is a woman of the lowest caste, a *dumni*,
Cruelty or hardness of heart is a butcher's wife,
A slanderous heart is a woman of the sweeper caste,
Wrath which burns and destroys the world is a Pariah woman ;
What availeth thee to have drawn the lines of thy cooking square,
When all these four are seated with thee ?
They defile thy soul, they pollute thy body, they spoil all that thou dost eat.
Make meditation on Attributes Divine thy ablutions,
Then shalt thou be pure indeed ;
For, saith Nanak, in the life to come they alone shall be deemed good and pure who walk not the way of sin." [*Sri Rag Shlok*, 20 (1)]

The Brahmin acknowledged his error. He was freed from the chain of superstitions that had been round his neck till then. He became a disciple of the Guru.

Numerous others, Brahmins and non-Brahmins, men and women of all castes, were likewise shown the path that led to the Blissful Lord and taken into the Holy Fellowship founded by the Guru.

Some learned Brahmins thought among themselves, " If we manage to bring this hermit into our fold, great will be the glory of our religion. He will be another Sankracharya and will revive the fast decaying Hinduism. Let us go and try."

The Brahmins' Invitation.

They came and took their seats. After mutual greetings, the Brahmins, while acknowledging his spiritual greatness, invited him to be a leader of their community, owing allegiance to the gods and goddesses of the Hindu religion, worshipping them in the traditional way with sacrifices and burnt offerings. The Guru replied, " I own allegiance to none but the one Lord of all creation. I would worship no other. What use are the sacrifices and burnt offerings made to please imaginary, impotent gods ? Why waste away *ghee* and other nourishing commodities ? Far better will God be pleased if they are given to the poor and the needy, That will be the truest offering to the God of mankind." The Brahmins heard this and went away.

CHAPTER XIII

SHAIKH SHARF AND SIKANDAR LODI

A short time after, the Guru moved on from Hardwar. He travelled at his pleasure. Everywhere people heard, with a great zest, his message of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. They heard his Song, gave up their evil ways and blind superstitions, woke into a new life of the spirit, felt the lighting of a holy flame within their souls, and became the Guru's Sikhs or disciples. In a few days the Guru reached Panipat. There then lived a renowned Muhammadan Sufi faqir named Shaikh Sharf. The faqir had a large following among the Muslims. He was a devout man. He had spent his days and nights in ceaseless efforts to realize the Lord, but his efforts had till then borne no fruit. He was as far away from an abiding sentiment of His presence everywhere as he had been in the beginning when he sat at the feet of his teacher. He was coming to lose heart.

The Shaikh Surprised

The Shaikh was in such low spirits when Guru Nanak visited the place. The Guru had taken his seat near a well. One of the disciples of the Shaikh, named Tatihri, went to that well to fetch water for his spiritual guide. Seeing that the Guru was wearing a Persian cap and a strange, motley dress, Tatihri took him for a Persian faqir. He approached the Guru and accosted him with the Muhammadan salutation of "*Salam Alaikum*—Peace be with you." The Guru smilingly replied, "*Salam Alekh*—Salutation to the Invisible Lord." Tatihri was astonished to hear this pun on the Muslim salutation. He went back and told of it to his Pir. The latter, too, was puzzled. "Who can he be?"

thought he. "Not a Hindu, for no Hindu can dare thus distort the Mohammadan salutation. Who does not know the consequences of such liberty with the State religion? But no Muslim would mock his own religion. There is some mystery in this. He is either a mad man or one who has seen and enjoyed the Supreme Lord and risen above the limitations imposed by human creeds. In any case, I should like to see him"

Such indeed was the Guru's method. Wherever he went he said or did something which at once attracted people's attention. He could then lead them on to a realization of God and His ways.

Enters the Path.

The Shaikh went to the Guru. He saw that the Guru was sitting with eyes half-shut, enjoying a communion with God. At this sight a sensation of abiding calm and of joy unknown before passed through his heart and soothed his mind. He sat near the Guru and, after an exchange of greetings, began to put him questions about his faith and denomination. The Guru replied with a song which did for the Pir what his own efforts had till then failed to do. It gave him a vision of the Invisible, Blissful Lord. He found himself face to face with Him. When the song ceased, the Pir clasped the Guru's feet. A strange current, as that of electricity, passed through his body. There was a new light in his eyes, a new strength in his body, a new joy in his heart, and a new life in his soul. The Pir became a Sikh or a disciple of the Guru. With him all who owned him as their spiritual teacher became disciples of the Guru.

Divine Music in the Prison.

From Panipat the Guru moved on to Delhi. Sikandar Lodi was then the emperor. The reader has already seen what a ferocious bigot Sikandar was. He was oppressing the Hindus and forcing them to choose between Islam and

death. All men of religion who preached peace and toleration were picked out by him and put to great tortures. Kabir, Namdev, and Ravdas, were among those who had to experience his fanatic fury. Even at the time of the Guru's visit to Delhi, several men of God, mostly Hindus, were undergoing rigorous imprisonment on account of their faith. They had to labour at handmills. Guru Nanak and Mardana were, likewise, arrested and put in prison. Like others, they too were set to work at the handmills and given corn to grind. The Guru did the labour for a time. The sight of those weak, innocent men of God doing labour far beyond their physical strength under the fear of the jailor's lash, touched the Guru's heart. His body shook with deep emotion. A glory overspread his countenance. He bade Mardana play the rebeck, for the Word of God had come. Then he sang one of his beautiful, soul-stirring Songs. All prisoners forgot their mills and ills. The warders forgot their duty of enforcing labour. The lashes fell from their hands. All listened to the heavenly music, wrapt in blissful wonderment. Others also came to the prison gates and began to listen. Sikandar also came and stood listening like a dumb animal. The Guru sang of the Supreme Lord and His infinite Mercy and Grace. He sang of the transitoriness of the human life, of the folly of men who take their physical life of this earth to be all in all ; he sang of the dreadful consequences of evil acts which overtake all, kings and beg-

* According to Latif, the Guru was arrested on the reports of the *Kardars* of the Emperor who "informed his majesty that a faqir whose tenets were different both from the Koran and the Vedas, was openly preaching to the people, and the importance which he was assuming might, in the end, prove serious to the State." (P. 245)

This means that the political effects of the Guru's message were even then becoming visible to farsighted men in the service of the ruler. The general populace could not but have felt which way the Guru wanted to lead them. Yet some writers would have us believe—and Latif among them—that the Guru had no political object or aims.

gars alike ; he sang of the noble qualities of Love, Sympathy, and Devotion, which distinguish man from the beasts and raise him to the level of gods ; he sang of the Eternal Home of the soul where alone could lasting peace and abiding joy be obtained, and of the way that led to that Home of Bliss.

The Bigot Subdued.

Sikandar bowed to the Guru and begged forgiveness for his past sins. The Guru said, "Forgiveness can be obtained by sincere repentance and honest efforts to undo the wrong done to innocent creatures of God. What harm have these people done to thee that thou hast put them in a place meant for culprits and criminals ?"

Sikandar understood what the Guru wanted him to do. He opened the prison gates and set free all the prisoners. The Guru then advised him to remember God and serve Him by lovingly serving His sons and daughters. "Remember, O Emperor, added the Guru, "all living beings are the creation of God The divine spark glows in the depth of every human heart Regard all living beings as thy own self and be kind to them all Differences of creed among men should not mislead you from your duty towards all your subjects Hindus and Muslims are all His sons. You are responsible for both. Remember that acts performed here will accompany you in the life to come. Take heed in time, lest you should find it too late to make amends. You oppress your subjects and subject them to innumerable tyrannies , you issue orders as please your fancy, remember, narrow and steep is the path that awaits you after death. Nobody will come to your rescue there. Your fanatic zeal for Islam is leading you to your own dire doom. Your Prophet will not save you from the consequences of your inhuman deeds, though you perform them in his name. This life is not long ; use it for the betterment of the life to come which will be

long and lasting. Be just and kind to all. If the subjects are contented, prosperous, and happy, the king rules in peace and security. To be happy and in peace in this life, and to be free from pain and suffering in the life to come, you should be a just and merciful ruler."

The Emperor was deeply impressed with what the Guru said and promised to abide by the advice offered to him.

CHAPTER XIV

SWEETENS SOAP-NUTS

Extensive Tours.

Thereafter the Guru decided to undertake a tour of distant parts of the country. His dress was a strange motley of the dresses worn by Hindu and Muhammadan religious men. He wore a mango-coloured jacket like Muslim faqirs and over it he threw a white sheet. On his head he wore a cap usually worn by Muhammadan anchorites called *Qalandars*. Round his neck he had a necklace of bones. On his forehead he had the saffron mark of the Hindus. This dress seems to have been chosen with a purpose. It was so conspicuously strange that it could not fail to attract attention. This was what the Guru wanted for the propagation of his faith ; for he was ever sure to convert all who came to him. The dress was also calculated to ridicule the religious garbs that were prevalent in the land ; for he was, in the end, to discard all unusualities of dress, and put on and advocate the usual dress of the common people. He also wanted to show to all that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muhammadan, that all sects were equally dear to him, and that he was to found a new one free from their defects—a Holy Fellowship where all would be brothers and equals.

Discourse with Yogis.

From Delhi he moved on to a place then called Gorakhmata and situated about twenty miles from Pilibhit in the United Provinces. It was a stronghold of the Yogis. We have seen that it was the Guru's wont to meet reputed men of all creeds and races and to have discussions with them regarding the true goal and ideal of man and the mode of

life most suited to the attainment of that ideal. His object in going to Gorakhmata was the same. He wanted to wean them from a life of retirement and inactivity and to lead them to a life of Work and Devotion, of Love and Service. There were several of them at Gorakhmata. They questioned him about his faith. His answers surprised them for they bespoke a far greater communion with the Supreme Lord and a far deeper knowledge of His Ways and Will than they had acquired even after life-long practice of yoga. They felt that if he could be won over to their sect, it would regain fresh vigour and spread rapidly in the land. So they invited him to be a yogi and to adopt their way of dress. The Guru replied that religion did not consist in this or that form of dress, nor in performing this or that ceremony, nor in visiting this or that place of pilgrimage. True religion, said he, should affect the heart and soul and the whole life of man. It should teach him how to live in the world with honour, how to abide pure amid the impurities and allurements of the world, how to make the best use of the human life which, if once thrown away, would not come to him again and again. "Why throw away this precious life ? Why take it as a curse to be borne in gloom and dejection ? It offers splendid opportunities for an all-sided self-improvement and for assisting others in their mark on the path of Peace and Happiness. Come out of your retirement. Humanity needs your services. You are the pick of the Hindu society. Why desert it ? Why sit aloof, totally careless of its condition and destiny ? Come, step forth into the arena of life; be heroes and saviours instead of cowards and refugees. Therein lies the essence of true religion. That is the true field and function for a true yogi or man of religion."

The Sidhs bowed in obeisance. They acknowledged the truth of the Guru's words but regretted that they could not follow the noble but arduous path prescribed by him. The deep ruts

in which their lives had run for decades had become the graves of their higher selves and they were content to lie there and sigh till bodily death removed them from the world.

He stayed with them for some time, giving them lessons in his religion. The Sidhs listened to him in deep respect and prayed him to stay with them for ever. But he declined the invitation, saying that he had to do his duty towards other people as well When he left that place, the Sidhs called it Nanakmata in memory of his visit.

The Sweet Soap-nuts.

One of the Yogis, named Machhandarnath. felt specially drawn towards the Guru. When the latter left the place, this yogi accompanied him in order to enjoy, for some time more, the soul stirring Songs and Discourses of the Minstrel of God, as he moved or halted at pleasure. At one of these halts, about twenty miles from Nanakmata, Machhandarnath begged for something to satisfy his hunger with. They were then sitting under a soap-nut tree. The Guru pointed to the branch which was just above their heads, and asked Mardana to shake it. As the nuts fell, the Guru bade the yogi eat his fill. The nuts were sweet. Thinking that perhaps the tree was of a special variety, the yogi climbed up another branch and tasted a nut from there. It was bitter as ever.

Up to this day the branch under which the Guru sat bears sweet soap-nuts while the others bear bitter ones.

At Benares.

From there the Guru moved on to Benares, the stronghold of Hinduism. Several Pandits swarmed round him. The chief among them was Chatur Das. He had a long discussion with the Guru, but all his wisdom and learning, acquired by study and contemplation, could be no match for the strength of mind and soul with which a direct and steady vision of God had equipped the Guru ; for he was ever drinking at the

Fountain-head of all wisdom and knowledge, his soul was ever open to the divine inflow, and he was ever in unbroken communion with the Supreme Source of Light and Life.

The Guru told the Pandit that the wearing of a *saligram* (stone god) and other such things and the worship of idols were all as futile as the irrigation of barren land where no seed could grow. Engaged in these acts, people were wasting their lives. The powers of body and mind should be employed in a better cause. Habits of mind and body should be so moulded and transformed that the energy directed in diverse evil or vain channels should all flow in one direction, the direction of love and service of God through his creatures. Thus could man make the best use of his life, and, departing hence, be welcomed to the bosom of the Supreme, Blissful Lord.

The discourse which the Guru addressed to the Pandit was later embodied by the Guru in a poetical composition called the *Dakhni Oankar*.

CHAPTER XV

THE INVALUABLE JEWEL OF LIFE

Robbers Reclaimed.

From Benares the Guru and his companion journeyed on to further east. In all places the Guru preached his faith and obtained many converts. Once, when they were travelling through a thick wood, they met a band of robbers or *thugs*. The sparkle that lit the Guru's face they took to denote possession of great material wealth. They surrounded the two on all sides. The Guru said, "What do you want, brothers? Who are you?" The look in the Guru's eyes, the tone of his words, his fearless mien, and his smile of power and confidence, affected the hearts of the robbers. "We shall be frank with you," replied they. "We are robbers. We shall rob you and kill you into the bargain. That is our trade."

The Guru smiled again and said, "All right, do follow your trade in this life; but have you ever thought that this your trade will follow you in the life to come? That all your foul deeds will one day stand arrayed against you as witnesses of the evil that you are doing here? Have you ever thought of that, my friends?"

The robbers were taken aback. The Guru looked into their eyes and read their minds and souls. They shivered before his gaze. A strong deep remorse filled their hearts. Scales fell off their eyes. They bowed, held the Guru's feet, and begged forgiveness and light. The Guru bade them rise and sin no more. He told them to give away to the poor all that they had amassed by following their evil trade; to live by the sweat of their brow; to share their earnings with the

needy and poor; and ever to remember the Supreme Lord. If they did all that, they would be unable to do evil to any of their fellowmen. They agreed to do as bidden.

Emanations of Love.

The Guru moved on, travelling through thick woods where wild beasts went about freely, and living on the fruits of the forest trees. Wolves, tigers, lions, and bears saw him, bowed to him, and went their way. He feared nothing. He was imbued with infinite love for all living beings. The emanations of love that radiated from his heart affected even the wild beasts that came within their range. The beasts of the forest bowed to him, for they saw in him the Glory of the Supreme Loving Lord.

At Patna.

After a time the two reached Patna. They sat a few miles from the city on the banks of the Ganges. A big fair was being held there. People were bathing in the holy waters. To them, too, the Guru showed the right path of winning the pleasure of the Lord. Numerous hearts were won there. Several scholars and philosophers acknowledged him the visible embodiment of the best that was contained in the *Shastras*. They saw in him the personification of all divine and human virtues. They adored him as their spiritual guide.

One day Mardana said to the Guru, " Master, all holy men and all holy books have ever proclaimed that human life is a precious jewel. Still we find that most people waste it away in idle or sinful pleasures. How is it?"

The Guru replied, " It is true that human life is a precious and rare jewel. It cannot come to one again and again. It is an opportunity given to the soul to raise itself to the bosom of the Infinite Lord. Yet it is a sad truth that very few people are mindful of this truth. Doubt fills their minds and makes them indifferent. They fail to realize the measure-

less value of this gem of human life and throw it away like dust and trash. That is the way of the world."

Mardana replied, "But Master, it is said that a real jewel cannot be kept concealed. Its sparkle will be seen by those who happen to look that way. If life were really so invaluable a gem, most of the people would not, in the face of the proclamations of the inspired teachers of mankind, fail so ignominously to realize its supreme worth"

Guru Nanak, "You are mistaken, brother. Only the trained eye of a clever jeweller can value a gem at its true worth. Very few people even care to look that way. They are too busy with their trifles They would not believe the words of a jeweller To them a gem is a useless pebble To convince yourself of this, take the gem that you found a few days ago and try to get it valued in the city."

Salis Rai the Jeweller

Mardana went into the city. A vegetable seller offered one radish for the gem and would not give two "What good is this pebble to me?" said he. A dealer in sweets was willing to give a pound of his delicious articles for that 'piece of stone'

Mardana went from shop to shop Some offered him a yard or two of cloth, some a few seers of grain, and some a few pieces of copper money The dealers in gold offered him a few rupees. At last he went to a jeweller, Salis Rai by name The jeweller took the jewel in his hand, examined it with care and unfeighed delight, returned it to Mardana, and said, "Friend, this gem is priceless. My whole store of precious stones can but meet a part of its price. Take it back to your master. In addition, deign to accept this sum of hundred rupees. I offer this sum to you for your giving me the privilege of having a look at such a rare thing."

Mardana took the sum and retraced his steps. He was full of wonder. When he narrated his experiences to the Guru, the latter laughed and said, "Have you seen how people reject a priceless jewel for their trash ? They have no eye for it. Their thoughts and faculties are switched the other way. If you now go and tell them what the jeweller has said about the gem, they would simply laugh at you. Similar is the attitude of most men towards this human life. Now go and return this money to Salis Rai. We don't need it."

New Disciples.

Mardana went again to Salis Rai. The latter would not take back the money. Mardana placed it there and turned to go. Salis Rai called him back and questioned him about his master who would return such a sum and thus demonstrate his freedom from attachment for riches. Salis Rai learnt that the man whom Mardana called his Master was not a man of the world but a saint. He sent his servant, Adhraka, with a basket of fruit for that great one. He himself followed a little later. Adhraka saw the master, fell at his feet, and rose a changed man. A new light was in his eyes, a new life throbbed in his veins, a new joy filled his whole being, an unknown calm descended upon his soul. He became a disciple of the Guru. When Salis Rai came to the spot, he at once saw the change that had come about in his servant. The jeweller, too, bowed before the Guru and was blessed. The Guru instructed them in the principles of his faith. He awoke in them a true sense of the importance of human life and roused in them a desire to make the best use of it. They became disciples of the Guru and brothers and loving servants of mankind.

When the Guru was about to go, Salis Rai and others who had drunk the waters of life that flowed from the Guru in

the form of Divine Song, pleaded with him to prolong his stay. The plant of their faith was too tender to take care of itself. The Guru's presence was essential for its unhampered growth. But the Guru had other duties to attend to. The divine call, which had made him quit his home and family, would not let him rest long in one place. So he made ready to go. The people said, "But Master, how shall we live without thee? Don't leave us soon. Who will sing to us of the Sweet Lord and His Blissful Presence? Who will show us the path whereby to approach and be one with Him?" The Guru pointed to Adhraka and said, "Him do I appoint your teacher. He has grasped well the spirit of my teachings. His soul is already knit to the feet of the Lord. He will show you the path that has been shown to him." Salis Rai bowed before Adhraka, who till a short while before, had been his servant but was now his spiritual guide. The Guru moved on.

CHAPTER XVI

A CHARMER CHARMED

At Gaya he was surrounded by Pandas. They said, "Your ancestors need food and clothing. Come, give to us all that you would like your ancestors to enjoy. We shall repeat certain *mantras* and perform suitable ceremonies. Your ancestors will, thereby, get all that you give us. They also need light. Give us oil. We shall light a lamp for them.

True Light and Food for the Soul.

The Guru was amused at their talk. "Well friends," said he, "this lamp of yours can be of no avail. Mine is the lamp of God's Name. Misery which afflicts mankind is the oil therein. Such a lamp sheds light on the path of life here and hereafter and consumes the oil; misery is banished by the Name. By constant meditation on the Supreme Source of Life, Light and Love, man succeeds in winning His pleasure. He then casts away all fear of Death. Lasting Peace and abiding Joy fill him through and through. Such is my lamp, O friends! Even my ancestors get light and comfort from it.* As for your offer to transport food and clothing to the other world, where you say my ancestors live, well, I am sorry I can't accept it. It is preposterous. If the articles given to you could realy reach people's ancestors, strange complications would arise in that spirit world. Suppose a robber robs a robber and offers the stolen articles for being conveyed to his ancestors. You will certainly get your fee, repeat the *mantras*, perform the prescribed ceremony, and say that the things

* *Rag Asa.*

have reached the ancestors of those good folk. Well, what will happen if the articles in question, which you say reach the other world, are recognised by the ancestors of the people who had been robbed of them. An angry dispute will arise between the three parties of the ancestors. How ridiculous does this look! Be sure, nothing material can be conveyed to those who have left this earth. In the life to come a man can derive benefit only from such charities as he bestows in this life, on the needy and the poor out of his own honest earnings.* So give up this parasitic trade. You are burdening your souls. Live by honest labour. Ever meditate on the Lord most high, sing His praises, acquire good qualities, and serve God through His creatures. Thus shall you please Him and obtain real sustenance here and hereafter. Even the souls of your ancestors shall benefit thereby."

In the Land of Wiles and Magic

The Pandas were convinced of their error. They agreed to do as bidden. After a short stay the Guru moved on further into Bihar and Bengal until he reached the territory of Kamrup. The women of that tract were notorious for their wiles and magic. A few miles from Dacca was the city of Dhanpur. Reaching near it, the Guru halted a little way off. Mardana felt an irresistible craving for bread. Cautioning him against the wiles of the women of that place, and counselling him to think on God all the time, the Guru permitted Mardana to go.

Nur Shah

Nur Shah was the chief among the wily women of the place. Her palace was the most magnificent. Her beautiful maids were the most active in enticing people into the snares of their Circe. She herself was marvellously beautiful. To the natural charms of her exquisite beauty she had added the powers acquired by cultivation of her will power and the

* *Asa di Var*

practice of hypnotism. By means of all these powers of her mind and body Nur Shah mastered the wills of all who came near her. Under her spell they acted, felt, and suffered, according to her suggestions. They danced to her tunes. Many sadhus and faqirs, many mystics and hermits, had fallen into her net and lived as her slaves.

Mardana Becomes Her Lamb.

Mardana went to her palace. She welcomed him to a dainty feast. Then she looked into his eyes with a steady, fixed gaze. Mardana shivered. For some time he resisted her influence; for he remembered his Guru and God. But gradually her potent will over-powered him. A strong torpor seized his senses. He fell to his knees and kissed the place that she was standing on. He obeyed her signs and suggestions like a lamb. He ate without food and drank without water. He would cry like a babe or laugh like a fool. Thus imprisoned in the spell of her will, Mardana forgot all about his Master.

Guru to the Rescue.

The Guru was sitting outside the city. His mind's eye traversed through space and pierced through bricks and stones.* He saw his Mardana caught in the snares of Nur Shah. He could have, if he had so liked, counteracted from the start her influence on the will of Mardana. But he wanted to do more. He wanted to rescue the charmer from the charm of evil practices. So he had let her subdue Mardana's will and make him her lamb. After a little while, the Guru said '*Sat Kartar*,' and started towards the palace of Nur Shah. Crossing the threshold, he stood near the door. Her slaves invited him. He stood there unmoved. His eyes had a strange, steady gaze. Nur Shah, who had been sitting in her apartment, was drawn from there by some mysterious force. She came into the courtyard. The glorious stranger was standing near the gate. He had

** See Appendix B.*

withstood the charms of her slaves who now stood with lowered looks and bowed heads. At the sight of his countenance all her power of will seemed to leave her. Still, for a time, she tried to conquer the unconquerable will of the Master. He declined all offers of dainty dishes, cosy beds, and untold riches. He could touch none of these, said he. Nur Shah felt some cords snap within her. He stood there mute and unmoved. After a time he said, "*Sat Kartar*—the True Immortal Lord." She could resist no more. She could strive no more. Her will power was totally subdued. Thus overpowered she fell on her knees. Her eyes were wet, her head was low. The Guru now came up to her and said, "It is not good to indulge in practical jokes with Servants of God. Return my man to me?" She rose, went in, and bade Mardana rise and follow her. She released him from the grip of her will. On reaching the courtyard, Mardana beheld the Guru. He knelt before the Master and kissed his feet, saying, "Where have I been? Methinks I have been bleating, howling, barking, and crying. Have I been dreaming? How good of you to have come for me!"

Nur Shah Enters the Path.

The Guru bade him rise and play the rebeck. The master then sang a Song. It went deep into the heart of Nur Shah. She realized how she had been wasting in evil deeds a life that should have been utilized for far better ends. She was filled with remorse. She repented of her sins and follies. The Guru instructed her in the principles of his faith. She released all her slaves and became a willing slave of the Guru's Song. She distributed all her wealth to the poor and began to live by manual labour. She became a preacher of the Guru's faith, distributing both bodily and spiritual food to all who were in need thereof. A Gurdwara was later erected on the place where Nur Shah was won and installed as a preacher.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EVENING HYMN OF PRAISE AT JAGANNATH

Cruel, Queer Means for Nirvana.

Having toured through Assam, Kachhar, Eastern Bengal, and Burma, the Guru made a coasting voyage to Puri Jagannath on the Bay of Bengal. In that chief of the holy places of the Vaishnava Hindus was installed an idol of Vishnu or Krishna under the name of Jagannath. Idol worship and practices and superstitions associated with it were at their height there. In the month of Asar (June-July) the big idol, placed in a heavy iron chariot, used to be taken out in a procession through the city. So deep was the darkness of ignorance and superstition, that people considered it an act of merit and a means of attaining salvation to fall under the chariot and be crushed under its heavy iron wheels. It was the Guru's mission to dispel such sin and darkness from the land. He was up and doing to show to the misguided people the right path which led to salvation—not utter extinction or *Nirvana*, but active, abiding union with the All-powerful, All-pervading Lord. He had visited several sacred places of Hindus and had freed people from slavery to false ideals and impotent gods. It was the same object which took him to Puri Jagannath.

Heavenly Music.

He sat at a little distance from the temple. Mardana played the rebeck. The Guru sang a Divine Song. The sweet heavenly music, the soul-stirring Song, the strange radiant glory that lit the countenance of that strangely dressed Minstrel of God, his posture of complete

abandon and imperturbable serenity, all attracted the people. They came and sat near him, listening to the Song and feasting their eyes with the *Darshan* of the heavenly, inspired singer. The Song ceased; the music on the rebeck yet continued. The Guru sat with his eyes closed. After a while he said, "Thanks to Thee, O my Blissful Lord." Saying this, he opened his eyes. He cast a loving look on the people around him. It soothed many an aching breast, calmed many a fluttering heart, cooled many a burning forehead, bestowed repose and joy on many a restless uneasy soul. They told him their doubts, their fears, their anxieties, and their troubles. He told them of the Bounteous, All-pervading Lord, the source of all Power, Life, Light and Joy. He banished their doubts, quelled their fears, rid them of their anxieties, and taught them how to face and overcome their troubles.

Arguers Silenced.

They came to love and honour him. The Brahmins, who lived on the people's superstitions, were not a little perturbed. They tried to out-argue him. But his unbounded Love, his simple, yet forceful eloquence, his unassuming yet learned discourses, his penetrating yet sweet humour, his fearless yet gentle denunciation of the parasitic life of the priests, and the truth and sincerity of all that he said, silenced all who came to argue with him. They acknowledged his supremacy and went away.

Evening Service.

Evening came. It was the time for the evening service in the temple. The priests and others invited the Guru to join them in their hymn to Jagannath—the Lord of the Universe. The Guru agreed. Going into the temple, he found that in a huge gold salver, inset with pearls and precious stones, they had put a large lamp with several wicks on all sides. It was fed with ghee instead of oil. Beside the lamp, in

small silver plates, were placed offerings and incense. A number of priests were waving beautiful feathery *chauries* or fans over the Image. Musical instruments of various types began to play. All stood up and the ceremony began. The salver was waved up and down, right and left, in a regular circle before the large idol. A hymn was sung all the time in praise of the god that sat lifeless before them.

The Guru slipped out. He sat under the canopy of heaven. He looked at the sky with its myriads of shining twinkling stars, big and small. He breathed a silent prayer of thanks and glorification, closed his eyes, and let his soul rise to the feet of the Creator and Sustainer of the beautiful world. After the ceremony the priests learnt that the Guru had not joined them in the *Arti*

They were angry. They came out and remonstrated with the Guru for his having broken his promise and not having joined them in the hymn of praise to Jagannath. The Guru replied, " No, brothers, I have not broken my promise. I have not held aloof from the hymn to the Lord of the Universe. Rather you have done so. You did not join me in the hymn." The priests and the rest of the worshippers were mystified. They asked him to explain what sort of *arti* he had been performing all by himself.

Arti or Hymn of Praise.

The Guru made a sign to Mardana. Music on the rebeck began. The Guru sang his famous song called the *Arti*. All stood listening dumbly. Thus ran the song :-

"The whole heaven is the salver,
The sun and the moon are lamps therein,
Countless little stars are pearls beside.
The winds do fan Him with *chauries* unseen,
The perfume rising from millions of flowers, plants, and trees on the earth is the incense offered to Him in His temple of the Universe.
How wonderful is Thy Arti O Lord, that is being thus performed.
Unbeaten, endless music of the whole creation resounds like trumpet beyond number.

A milion eyes hast Thou and yet not one mortal eye ;
Millions are Thy forms and yet not one bodily form ;
Countless lotus-feet hast thou and art yet without one foot of flesh and bone ;
Innumerable organs of smell are Thine, and yet no such mortal organ hast Thou,
The bewitching play of Thine hath charmed me, O Lord.
By the beams of Thy brilliant face do all things shine.
Thou art the life of all life and the light of all light.
By the teachings of the Guru is the Divine Light revealed
My Arti consists in obedience to Thy Will as it be.
O Lord, my soul is lulled and charmed by the perfume of Thy lotus feet, verily like the bumble bee which is drawn and held by a fragrant flower.
I thirst for Thee both night and day like a thristy Sarang
O God, let Thy grace descend on me in showers sweet.
Allay the thirst of Nanak, Thy Sarang, O Lord of Bliss,
In the Supreme Joy of Thy holy Name let me ever repose,"*

The True Knowledge.

The song ended. The Guru sat with his eyes upraised in wonderment. The listeners—King, priests, and the laity—all stood dumb. All their lives they had been worshipping pieces of stone which their own hands had shaped into idols. They had never thought of their own Maker. The Supreme, Peerless Artist who had made the sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens, and the earth with its myriad beauties, and had set them all to wheel and dance and make eternal music round His throne, Him they had completely ignored. The Guru's song opened their eyes. They stood in mute admiration, waiting for him to open his lips and talk to them. At last, after a little while, he said, "Sat Kartar", and cast a sweet, loving look on the people. That look gripped their hearts. It cleansed their minds and woke their souls. They bowed and begged for more instruction. He taught them to lead lives of active Love and Service, to be ever in tune with the Infinite Lord of Creation, to worship

* *Rag Dhanasri, Arti.*

Him ever in thought, word, and deed, to discern and develop into radiant life the Divine spark which was in them all, but which had been buried under the debris of their low passions, impulses, and desires. The dead lived again. A new life throbbed in every vein.

Union in Separation.

They came to the Guru day after day. They heard his soul-awakening Song. They listened to his divine discourses. They became his, body and soul. After a few days, the Guru made ready to go. Duty, the Divine call, would not let him rest among his loving disciples. But they begged with love and humility. They pleaded that they were yet babes in the life of the spirit. They needed his protection. They yet needed the nourishment which his song alone could give and without which they could not live. He had not the heart to refuse such entreaties so lovingly made. So he agreed to stay for some time more. For two or three months he tended the tender plants that he had raised in that garden of Love and Worship. When he found that they could depend on the Lord and Sustainer of all life, he bade them farewell. His disciples built a temple of God on the site where the Guru had sat. They assembled there, every morning and evening, and sang his soul-stirring Songs. They found him in his Songs. He lived in their hearts and guided their steps. They lived in him and through him in his Lord who was now their Lord as well.

CHAPTER XVIII

BACK TO THE PANJAB

Mardana's Prayer.

Mardana had now become home-sick. He had had enough of travel, hardship, and hunger. Years had passed since he had left his home in a fit of strange infatuation for the Guru. He had been led through thick jungles, over lofty mountains, and across dreary deserts. On several occasions his very breath had been taken away by the sight of wild ferocious beasts which had met them during their wanderings. It was a miracle that the beasts had not devoured them. But he would run no further risks if he could help it. So he besought the Guru either to return home or to let him go. The Guru advised him to be patient. Duty assigned to them by God had yet to be done.

All the same, the Guru directed his steps towards the Panjab. He took the route which his feet chose under the will of the Lord. Through what cities, towns, villages, jungles, and plains, they passed we have little record to show. It is recorded, however, that they passed through Rohilkhand on their homeward journey.

In Rohilkhand.

Rohilkhand was then a land of darkness. The Rohilla chiefs who held sway over the tract were wild and fierce. They caught all strangers and wayfarers and made them slaves. Guru Nanak's loving heart was touched to the core at the thought of the sufferings of these his unfortunate fellowmen in slavery. He felt pity for both the slaves and their masters. He resolved to unbind their captive bodies and souls, and make

them members of the Holy Fellowship for the establishment of which he had left his family, home, and country.

Mardana was permitted to leave the Guru for some time. Guru Nanak alone entered the dark country. Soon he was caught and sold into slavery. His 'master' was a Rohilla chief who wielded considerable influence both as a religious head and as a secular chief. His religion was, however, pure sham. It gave him power and brought him offerings. It touched not his soul. Rather, it hardened his heart. His secular rule was a savage tyranny. He set the Guru to do menial service in his household, for his wife had taken a fancy to the new, and unusually handsome, young 'slave.' But the Guru had come for another purpose. He could serve even the meanest creature of God out of his love for him and his Maker; but to serve a tyrant was against his grain. He looked at the Rohilla chief with eyes full of profound pity. The light in his eyes, the radiance on his forehead, the love that emanated from his heart, the fear-free peace and serenity that marked his mien, and the ineffable joy that seemed to engulf his whole being, had a quick, strange effect on the proud, stony-hearted chief. A little talk with the Guru, a little music from that sirenic throat, a beaming smile on that glorious face, reversed the whole position. The master became the slave, the slave became the master. The Rohilla chief bowed at the Guru's feet. He rose a changed man with a joyful lightness in his heart, mind, and soul. He became the Guru's disciple and slave. At the bidding of the Guru all slaves were set free in that city. A regular *Sat Sang* or Congregation of Disciples developed there in no time. The Guru's message reached other towns. People came and fell at his feet. He gave them new life and light; he knit their souls to the source of all Life, Light, and Joy. There were rejoicings all round. The Guru had freed the captives

Enslaves the Slave Owner.

and had made the captives and masters alike the slaves of the Lord. But they were now free, unsold slaves serving their Lord out of their own free will and choice, for in that service they tasted the joy which they had hitherto searched for in vain.

Mardana's Dream.

After a time Mardana rejoined the Guru. He again urged him to return to the Panjab, where his relatives and disciples were yearning to see him. "Remember, O Master," said he, "Thy word to Bebe Nanki. Thou didst promise to visit her wherever her sisterly love and disciple's devotion overpowered her resolution. Last night I saw her in a dream. She was extremely dejected on account of thy continued absence. Loving hearts can communicate their beatings across unlimited space. Surely thy tender heart must have told thee of thy sister's condition. Why delay? Why try her endurance so long? There are others, too, longing to see thee. Some would also be glad to see me. So let us return."

The Guru smiled and said, "Thy loving heart has quite well caught the vibrations of love sent forth by loving hearts in the Panjab. Yes, we should go back now."

On the Way Home.

So they started towards the Panjab All along, the Guru continued to deliver his message to the people. Many unclean souls were made pure, numerous dead spirits were enlivened with a touch of divine life, innumerable dry, callous hearts were infused with the vital fluid of love and human sympathy, many a weary, dejected, forlorn 'traveller on the life's solemn main' was freed from despair, shown the guiding stars of Love, Service, and Devotion, leading to the true destination of man, and enabled to carry on his journey with a cheerful, trusting, hopeful heart.

Greetings at Sultanpur.

The two reached Sultanpur in December 1509 A. D. They were greeted by the whole city. Too great for words was the joy of Guru Nanak's sister. His wife wept for joy. His two sons fell at his feet. They all begged him not to leave them again. He bade them all be of good cheer. He knew their love for him; he realized his duty towards them. He loved them all with a tender emotion. He had a human heart. But a greater duty towards the whole family of man was calling him. Innumerable lost disciples needed his loving presence. In his human heart there was a radiant spark of the divine, too. That spark had to be shared with others who had smothered and crushed out completely the light which God had placed in their hearts. So he could not rest.

At Talwandi

Passing a day and a night at Sultanpur, the two started towards Talwandi On the way they halted for a day at Lahore with Mansukh, a rich, devoted disciple of the Guru. When they reached near Talwandi, the Guru sat a little outside the city and bade Mardana go and see his people. The news of the Guru's return spread very rapidly. Crowds of people came out to see him. His parents were at the head of the eager disciples. He bowed to his father and mother. They clasped him to their hearts. They then urged him to put off his hermit's dress, give up wanderings, and live the life of a familyman. The Guru counselled them to obey God's will with a firm faith. It was as impossible for him to give up then his life of a servant and devotee of God as for a fish to live out of water. He had no heart for the joys and pleasures of the world. He loved to enjoy God's blissful company and to make others partakers of that supreme bliss. He had come to visit them for he had promised to do so; otherwise his work

was not yet done; his travels were not yet ended; the divine call was still ringing in his ears; thirsty, dying souls were yet crying for the ambrosia of God's Name. hungry souls were yet crying for the Bread of God. He could not remain at home. But he would come again. They had to bow before the high resolve of their son. The Guru stayed for a night with his old disciple, Rai Bular, and set forth again on the following day. Mardana was with him as before.

CHAPTER XXIX

TOURS IN THE PUNJAB

Sheikh Brahm.

The two thence went towards the west, and made a circuitous tour around the banks of the rivers Ravi and Chenab. In all places the Guru sang the praises of the Lord and showed to the people the right way to please and meet Him. After a time they turned to Pakpatân, where, as we have seen, dwelt Shaikh Brahm. The Shaikh had already met the Guru, had, under his instruction, given up the life of penance and physical tortures, and returned to the shrine of his predecessors. The Guru wanted to see if the seed of the Name sown in the Heart of the Shaikh had fallen on good ground, had sprouted forth into life, and was in healthy growth. He halted a few miles from the city. The Shaikh heard of the Guru's arrival and came to see him.

The Shaikh was a Sufi and had the virtues and the failings of that sect of Muhammadan faqirs. The Islamic religion, founded in the deserts of Arabia, had been spread far and wide with the help of the sword and fire. Under the influence of the Persian and Indian schools of Philosophy it had, however, become Hinduised. This gave rise to the sect of Sufism among the Indian Muslims. But the Sufis were Muhammadans all the same. They could not give up either the form and appearance prescribed for their community or the Islamic law proclaimed by the Prophet and expounded by the divines. Shaikh Brahm being a Sufi, had none of the bigotry and intolerance of the ordinary Muhammadans. Still he was a follower of the Prophet.

Divine Discourse with the Shaikh.

When he saw the Guru, he tried to impress on him the benefit of having an intercessor at the Court of God. He said that God could not be approached but through the mediation of His Prophet. So, for a man of religion belief in the Prophet was as essential as that in one God. The Guru said, "No friend; let us worship the Timeless, Immortal Lord alone. Why worship him who is subject to birth and death? How can such a one intercede for others? In order that one may hope to reach the Lord's presence, one should acquire and cultivate such virtues as are pleasing unto Him. It is useless for a bride who desires union with her lord to seek the help of mediators. If she has beauty of form and character, if she is humble and sweet-tempered, if her heart and soul are filled with true love for her lord, if she ever tries by words and deeds to please him, surely he will come to her of his own accord. Similar is the case with the seekers of a union with the Lord, O Shaikh. Why pay homage to Vazirs and courtiers when the Great King is Himself accessible to all at all hours? This does not mean that a man needs no help or guidance in the journey to the land of the Beloved. One sorely needs the assistance of those who know the path and can show it to others. Their assistance and guidance are also needed on the way, lest one should falter or stumble, or his heart should get entangled in the countless allurements that beset the way. He needs all that help. Still, he has to travel on his own feet. And when the chamber of the Lord is reached, the seeker has to go in by himself. Whether the Lord takes him unto His bosom or sends him out to begin his journey anew will depend upon his own personal merits. No mediators will be of any help there. Lead a life of sweet humility, of loving, steadfast service of your fellow-creatures, and of constant, unwavering devotion to Truth; be ever a seeker

after the Lord; serve Him through His creatures, and, at all hours, let a hymn of praise and adoration rise from your heart. Seek instruction and guidance from men of God and then act on what they say. Let your whole heart, mind, and soul be in such a service. You will be surely saved. The Lord will surely take you unto His bosom."

No Longer a Sufi.

The Shaikh heard all this with rapt attention. He had been endeavouring to walk the path that led to the Lord, but had been troubled with doubts and misgivings. All these were now removed. The Guru's words accompanied with his look of divine grace had burnt out all dross from his heart and transformed it into pure gold. All downward tendencies were swept off completely. The Shaikh saw the Glory of God made manifest in the Guru. He bowed at the feet of the Master. A current as that of electricity entered his body through the forehead and sent a thrill of unknown joy through every cell and pore of his body. The Guru gently placed his hand on the back of the Shaikh. A fresh and stronger current, a greater and deeper thrill, passed through his frame. He rose at the bidding of the Master. There was a new light in his eyes, a new life throbbed in his veins, a quiet, abiding joy and an all-embracing love filled his heart; an ecstatic grandeur encircled his soul. He became a disciple of the Guru. The Guru then moved on.

Lodges with a Leper.

From there the Guru proceeded towards Dipalpur. Moving on from there, he reached a small village towards the close of day. As was his wont, he looked for a place of rest at some distance from the village. Seeing a solitary hut, he knocked at the door, saying, "A lodging for the night do we need, O brother." In the hut there lived a leper. He opened the door and saw the strange guest who had preferred the hut of the cast-away leper to the houses of the rich in the

village. "Even the beasts of the forest," said the leper, "hate to come near me. I am a loathsome sight to all. People shun me and would not even come this way. Who art thou that, at this hour of the night, comest to such a forlorn cast-away wretch as I and callest me thy brother?".

The Guru took his seat on the straw that was on the floor and signed to Mardana to play the rebeck for the Word of God had come. The Guru then sang a song which said, "All mortals suffer an endless agony. Their bodies waste away in this misery that grips their souls. All sufferings, troubles, and miseries, are the fruit of man's forgetfulness of the Blissful Lord; for those who forget the Lord and hearken not to His Word as sung by His Minstrels are verily like a leper who screams aloud for pain and misery. All their laments are futile. God knows our innermost, unuttered thoughts. All attractions of the world, all pleasures, and all affections, are but snares that captivate, blacken, and dwarf the soul. All who go hence with a brand of sin and evil on their forehead will find no shelter at the feet of the Lord. But God is merciful. If, through His Grace, a man begins to meditate on Him every moment of his life, and to exert himself in the path of love and service, he shall most surely be saved, the dirtiest leper though he be. All beg at His door; he bestows on all; he refuses and turns out none."*

The Divine Song Heals the Body and Soul.

The song ceased. The leper forgot his bodily suffering. A joy filled and overflowed his heart. He bowed at the Guru's feet. He rose a changed man. The Master's song had made him whole. Leprosy of body, mind, and soul, had left him. He was born anew into a life of the spirit. The Guru stayed there for the night, gave him the Song, and went away in the morning. But he ever lived in the heart of

* *Rag Dhansri.*

that poor castaway dweller in that hut. He lives there still, for a Gurdwara marks the site of the hut and his Song flows from there night and day, heeling and refreshing the diseased souls of weary, forlorn travellers on the ocean of life.

The Joy of Bebe Nanki.

Passing through Kangsar, Kasur, and Patti, the Guru crossed the river Beas and turned to Sultanpur. His dear sister and sincerest disciple was yearning to see him. He obeyed the summons of that pious loving heart. He went to her when she expected him the most longingly. Who can describe or measure the joy that filled her through and through ? All his disciples, including the Muhammadan governor, were glad to see him. He repeated to them his message of his Beloved Lord—the message to broadcast which he had left that place some years before.

Pathans Enter the Path.

After a stay of a day or two, he moved on to the east. Crossing the River Sutlej he toured through that part of the Panjab. In every place he sang of His Lord and directed the people to the right path. After some time he retraced his steps. Passing again through Sultanpur, he crossed the river Beas and began once more his self-chosen, heaven-ordained task of weaning people from a life of darkness and sin. Passing through Vairowal, Jalalabad, and other places, he reached a village called *Kiri Pathana di*. The Pathan residents of the place heard the Song of the Guru and bowed to it as to the voice of God. They became zealous disciples of the Guru, made songs in his praise, and sang them with great devotion.

At Syedpur.

The Guru continued his journey. After a circuitous tour, in which he visited also Batala in the present district of Gurdaspur, he reached Saidpur. Immense was Bhai Lalo's joy at

this unexpected visit of the Master. He narrated to the Guru some of the tyrannies of the Pathan rulers of the place. The Guru's tender, compassionate heart was touched to the core. Tears filled his eyes Then he heaved a deep sigh. His lips quivered imperceptibly. He poured out his heart in silent prayer to the Almighty Father of all. Then he said, "Bhai Lalo, woe upon woe is to be the lot of this wretched land. More is coming. These tyrants will go; but with them how many innocent, helpful lives will be lost, ruined, and plunged in misery!"

The Prophecy.

Then he signed to Mardana to play the rebeck for the Word of God had come. The Guru sat with half-shut eyes and a serene, solemn countenance. Then he raised his voice and sang a song of prophecy and lamentation Thus ran the doleful song

"As the Word of the Lord doth come to me,
Even so do I make it known to thee, O Lalo
With a mighty host, in terrible haste, will he hasten hither from Kabul
Like a bridegroom, but with a huge crowd of sins and licence as his bridal procession
By brutal force will he demand the gift of India's wealth as his bride, O Lalo
Woe and misery will disfigure this luckless land
Modesty, honour, and righteousness will all disappear
Evil and shameless vice will hold the field, O Lalo dear
Brahmins and Qazis will no longer be called to solemnize conjugal union,
The devil himself will do that job, O Lalo
Rape and ravin will be the order of the day
No woman will they spare though Hindu or Muslim she be
The Muhammadan women will, in soul's deep agony, read aloud their holy book,
And in a piteous moan will call upon God, O Lalo
The Hindu women of all castes, high and low,
Will suffer the same terrible woe

Then will paeans of murder be sung, O Nanak,
Human blood will form the saffron for such gory rites.
In this city of corpses Nanak doth sing the praises of the Lord,
And giveth utterance to this warning :—
He who hath created all beings and assigned them their different stations,
Sitteth aloof and watcheth all.
True is the Lord, true is His verdict, and true the justice that He meeteth out to all according to their *Karma* ;
Human bodies will be cut into pieces like shreds of cloth ;
India will find this saying of mine to be wholly correct.
In '78 will they come and in '97 depart ;*
Another, a disciple of a hero, will also rise in the land.
Nanak hath spoken the Word of the True Lord now,
And will proclaim the rest when these things do actually come to pass."†

*These dates refer to the career of the Mughals in India. The first of these refers to Babar's third invasion, during the course of which Syedpur was sacked in the Samvat year 1578 or 1521 A. D. The Guru's prophecy about the fate of that city and the advent of the Mughals was thus fulfilled.

The second of these dates, '97, may refer either to the expulsion of Hamayun from India, which happened in the Samvat year 1597 (1540 A. D.) or to the invasion of Nadar Shah which took place in the Samvat year 1797 (1739 A.D.). As regards the former of these two events, Marshman in his History of India writes as follows :—"He (Hamayun) fled from the field of battle to Agra, pursued by Sher Shah, and had barely time to remove his family to Delhi. From there he was driven to Lahore, where his brother instead of affording him an asylum, hastened to make peace with the victor aud was allowed to retire to his territory beyond the Indus. Thus fell the kingdom which Babar had established, and not a vestige of Mughal sovereignty remained in India at the end of fourteen years. The throne of Delhi was restored to the Afghans." (Vol. I, p. 99).

Regarding the invasion of Nadar Shah the same historian writes:—"The Mughal empire, which had been in a state of rapid decay for more than thirty years, since ths death of Aurangzeb, received its death-blow from the irruption of Nadar Shah and the sack of the capital. Its prestige was irretrievably lost, and the various provinces ceased to yield any but a nominal obedience to the throne of Delhi. The house of Babar had accomplished the cycle of its existence, and the sceptre of India was to pass into other hands." (Vol. I, pp. 201-202.)

†By the "disciple of a hero" is meant the "Khalsa," the disciple of Guru Gobind Singh, the great hero. We know that the Khalsa ended the tyrannical rule of the last of the Mughals and established itself in supreme power in the Panjab.

The words of the Guru, sung in a tone of pity and sorrow, spread a gloom over the listeners. A Brahmin placed some fruit before the Guru and said, "O Image of the Lord, Guru Nanak, be pleased to avert the doom that thou sayest is about to fall on the land."

"Brother," replied the Guru, "what am I that I should try to interfere in the working of the Lord's Will ? I have simply given utterance the Word of God as it came to me. The evil and sin, the tyranny and oppression that are being practised in this land, have invited their own punishment. God's wrath comes in the form of Babar. Sin shall destroy sin, but numerous innocent people will also suffer terribly. I see the whole heart-rending scene clearly as it will come about in a short time. But the ways of the Lord are inscrutable. His Will has to prevail. If you desire safety, you should leave this city and live a few miles away near a tank. The victorious plunderers will not pass that way."

CHAPTER XX

HAMZA GAUS RECLAIMED

The Sufi Faqirs.

It has been seen how, under the influence of Hinduism, there had arisen among the Muhammadans the new sect of Sufism. The Sufi faqirs performed severe penances and religious austerities sometimes even severer than those performed by the Hindu hermits. By such performances and by the practice of concentration they developed their power of will and acquired occult powers. They excelled the Brahmins in the cultivation and encouragement of superstition among the people. They would exorcise evil spirits by their spells, would feign to avert impending disasters, would promise sons to the sonless and riches to the poor, and do thousand other things to gain power and control over the popular mind. If some-one incurred their anger, they would threaten to destroy him by inviting on him the wrath of God. In this way they came to wield a great influence among the people. By fair promises and dark threats they obtained converts to their religion. Thus the Sufi faqirs, though no favourites with the orthodox Muhammadan Government, were, in their own way, supplementing its efforts towards the spread of Islam in India.

Guru Nanak's Plan of Work.

The Hindus were thus suffering under double oppression. The inferiority complex developed in them during centuries of subjection and slavery had reconciled them to their low miserable lot. They dared not protest or grumble. The spirit within them had ceased to stir even at the most

horrible of excesses They had no self-confidence or self-respect. Guru Nanak wanted to make them a free people who would neither stoop to oppress others nor bend against a tyrant's blows. He fain would end the system of government under which one sect, community, or group of men could treat others with cruelty, contempt, and arrogance. He realized that this huge task of spreading the gospel of freedom, equality, and brotherhood, could not be accomplished in a day or by violent revolution, even if he were so inclined. The entire outlook of the rulers and the ruled had to be changed. A moral regeneration had to be engendered and fostered in them, so that while, on the one hand, those in power might come to look upon oppression in all its forms as an unpardonable sin against God and humanity, on the other, those whose lot it was to be ruled and ordered should aquire such dignity and self-respect as would make it impossible for them to bend or bow before the tyrant's threats or steel. Both the rulers and the ruled had to be awakened to a sense of the duties as well as the rights of Man

So, on the one hand, he called upon the people to worship the Fearless, Omnipotent, Fear-quelling Lord and become brave and fearless , on the other, he met tyrants and oppressors whenever possible, remonstrated with them against their inhuman, ungodly acts, and, turning their thoughts towards the Kind and Merciful Father of all, urged them to treat their subjects as they would themselves wish to be treated by the Great King Thus, as we have seen, he feared not the power or wrath of Malik Bhago, humbled that haughty man before the eyes of his neighbours and fellow-townsmen, banished all feelings of inferiority from the hearts of Bhai Lalo and others of his low status, and roused in them a sense of equality and self-respect. We have seen how he met the ferocious bigot, Sikandar Lodi, and made him listen to his Divine Counsel and vow to be a kind and just ruler. Simi-

larly, whenever he heard of any Sufi faqirs using their position and powers in a wreckless manner, he boldly went to them, discussed things with them, overpowered them with his deep learning and spiritual grandeur, and taught them to live as brothers and helpers of the people of all castes and creeds. Two such conquests of love we shall narrate here.

Hamza Gaus.

In the city of Sialkot there lived a Muslim faqir named Hamza Gaus. By virtue of the severe penances that he had performed, by the occult powers which he was generally believed to possess, by means of spells and charms which he gave to the people for the fulfilment of their desires, and by means of other contrivances he had acquired a great influence in the locality.

A Khatri Hindu had no son. He approached the Pir and begged him to intercede for him and to get him the gift of sons. He promised to give the first born to the Pir. Hamza Gaus promised to pray for the fulfilment of the Hindu's wishes.

In due course, three sons were born to the Khatri. He took the eldest to the Pir and said, "Here do I make over the child to you. Now name his price. I shall pay that and buy him from you ; for such is the practice in such cases." Hamza Gaus wanted to have the child and nothing else. The Khatri offered him a large sum of money, even weight for weight in silver and gold, but the faqir would have none of it. The Khatri took the child back to his home.

The Pir's Wrath.

The Pir got angry. He vowed vengeance not only on the offending Hindu but on the whole city which harboured such a promise-breaker. So he retired into a closet which had a dome over it. Closing the door from inside, he directed his disciples not to disturb him or let him be

disturbed on any account. He would come out himself after he had his wishes fulfilled by dint of the austerities which he was to practise for forty days, concentrating his thoughts, all the time, on the doom which he wanted should fall on the city and its people.

The news of this resolve of the dreaded faqir spread in the city like wild fire. The people, who had reasons to believe and fear that the Pir really possessed powers to destroy the city, were in great despair. Most of them began to observe fasts and to say prayers to their various deities. But there seemed to be no effect. A deputation of the people went to the door of the Pir's cell and raised a loud lament. But the Pir remained unmoved.

Guru Nanak Comes to Save All.

The people of the city were in this predicament when Guru Nanak hastily left Bhai Lalo; for his highly sensitive heart had caught the vibrations sent forth by the woe-laden hearts of the people of Sialkot. Passing through Pasrur, he reached near the city. He sat outside, by the side of an old grave-yard under a Ber tree. The Pir's dome was visible from there. After having refreshed himself a little, the Guru sent Mardana to the door of the cell. He was to tell the watchers at the door that the Minstrel of the Almighty had come and would speak to the Pir. The disciples of the faqir said that they could not disobey their Pir. Mardana returned to the Guru. He was sent again. He was asked to appeal in the name of God and on behalf of the whole populace of the city which was in great panic. If all appeals failed, he was to tell the watch-keepers at the door that their Pir's *chhila* or penance would be broken by the Will of God exactly at mid-day. Mardana went and said all this. But the disciples of the Pir were adamant. Still the words of Mardana did not fail to alarm them.

Gradually, the news spread in the city that a quaintly dressed man of God had come, that he had tried to get an opportunity of speaking to the Pir and dissuading him from his wrathful resolve, but, having failed, had foretold that the Pir would be baffled in his ungodly object, because his *chhila* would break by the Will of God. Crowds of people gathered round the Guru. He sat with his eyes half-shut and slightly raised in the direction of the dome under which sat the Pir. Mardana was playing the rebeck and singing one of the Master's Songs of prayer and invocation to the Almighty Father of all.

People sat in great suspense. The sun slowly climbed up the sky. Exactly at noon a loud sound was heard from the direction of the dome. It seemed that a strong building had cracked as if by a bolt of thunder. It was found that the dome under which the Pir sat in concentration had cracked. The rays of the sun had penetrated into the dark room and fallen on the head of the Pir. The loud sound of the crack and the beam of rays which suddenly fell on him in the darkness disturbed him and interrupted his concentration. He became afraid lest the roof should fall on his head. He got up hastily, opened the door, and rushed out of the cell in great terror.

The Wrathful Pir Reclaimed.

The *chhila* was thus broken. The people felt relieved. All bowed to the Guru and thanked him for his having saved them from the consequences of the dreaded Pir's wrath. The Pir himself came to the Guru in great humility. The Guru represented to him the injustice of his wrath against a whole city. When the Pir complained that the Khatri had broken his promise and deserved chastisement along with his neighbours who had not forced him to fulfil his word, the Guru said, "But sinners and wrong-doers should

be reclaimed and not destroyed. God is Love. It becomes us, His servants, ever to strive to bring the misguided people on to the path that leads to His Abode. We should show them how God loves the repentant sinners by loving and forgiving them ourselves. There is too much of hatred and oppression in the land already. We men of God should sow the seeds of Love and amity among the people."

The Pir was convinced of his error. He bowed before the Guru and vowed to live thenceforth, as, the torch-bearer of the Loving, Merciful God. The *Jujuba* (*Ber*) tree, under which the Guru sat, exists to this day and is called the Baba's Ber. A Gurdwara stands at the site to commemorate the event. The domed cell of the Pir with its cracked top stands in sight of the Gurdwara.

CHAPTER XXI

GURU NANAK AND MIAN MITHA

Mian Mitha's Delusion.

A few miles from Sialkot there then lived another Sufi faqir equally well known for his real or assumed powers. He was held in great awe by the people near about him. Many were his followers. Many a Hindu youth had accepted Islam under the spell of Mian Mitha's powers. The faqir himself was given to penances and austerities. His heart was dry. He lacked the saving qualities of love and human sympathy. In consequence, the path that he had chosen took him daily farther and farther away from the right path that could lead to the Source of Love, Life, and Light. He was misleading others, too. He was verily like a man who sets out from his home intent on drinking at the ocean of nectar, but who, reaching near the shore, begins to play with conchs and pebbles lying there, and forgets the object of his journey thither. Mitha was engaged in such child's play. He was in the grips of a great delusion. But his example was catching. He had enslaved the beliefs of the people around him. They had ceased to look up to the Fountain of all Love, Life, and Light.

Guru Nanak heard this. He resolved to break the dome of Mian Mitha's delusion and show to him the light of heaven as he had already shown to Hamza Gaus. He went and halted in a garden at a little distance from Mian Mitha's place Heavenly music and divine Song attracted the people, who began to assemble in large number. All who saw the Guru and heard his Song became his, body and soul. They began to adore him. Among such new admirers of the Guru

was Pir Abdul Rahman, the religious teacher of Mian Mitha.

His Meeting with Guru Nanak.

That Pir carried the news of the Guru's greatness to his pupil, and advised him to meet that dear one of the Lord and obtain his blessings. Mian Mitha, though a Sufi, was not free from religious narrow-mindedness. He had heard that the Guru was a 'Hindu.' Hence he did not like the idea of a renowned Muslim faqir's going to a Hindu, no matter how great the latter might be Still when his teacher praised the Guru and called him a beloved one of the Lord, Mian Mitha could not but obey and go So he went. He found that Mardana was playing a heavenly tune on the rebeck and singing a soul stirring Song of the Master The Guru was sitting as in a trance. The music, the song, and the radiance on the Guru's face affected Mian Mitha's heart. He quietly sat near the Guru After a while the song ceased. A little later the Guru opened his eyes What eyes? They seemed to be laden with ambrosia and emitting the lustre and glory of a mind and heart at peace with all They were so sweet, so loving, so deep, so penetrating, and so full of repose and joy The Guru's countenance looked like that of a bride who had enjoyed the company of her lord to her heart's content and was even just then coming out of the bridal chamber —her heart laden with immeasurable joy, her body yet remembering the touch of her lord, her eyes yet filled with sleep-free heavenly pleasure and trying to recatch the glimpses of the lord who had just hidden himself from view. In that countenance there were the calm and joy of hearty satisfaction, a hope and assurance of future blissful union, and compassion for the unfortunate creatures who were unable or unwilling to enjoy the company of the Spouse, and a resolve to convey to the people the joyful tidings of the Eternal Abode of the Bounteous Lord.

Mian Mitha saw all this The Guru turned his eyes on him. The Mian felt as if he were pierced through the heart. Impure blood that had engendered and nourished in him the seeds of pride, hatred, and jealousy, seemed to be oozing out, drop by drop. In its place pure bright blood, surcharged with Love and Sweetness, was beginning to course through his veins.

Mitha's Dream and Endeavour.

The Guru greeted him with a loving smile and enquired how he was. The words roused the Sufi faqir from his reverie. He returned the greetings and thanked the Guru. All around him he saw sitting people from the village, Hindus and Muhammadans alike. A look at them revived in him his old pride, and his zeal for Islam. He remembered that the Guru was a 'Hindu'. "How good it would be if he could be converted and saved". Sidhs, Yogis, Pandits, Qazis, and faqirs had all, on meeting the Guru and knowing his greatness, cherished the same desire. They had wished to convert such a great one to their path. But little did they know, when they gave themselves up to such ambitious dreams and longings, that the Guru was destined to convert the like of them all to his new faith.

Mian Mitha began by questioning the Guru about his faith. When he learnt that the Guru was a worshipper of one God, he felt glad, for he thought that the Guru was already very near Islam. Half the battle was already won. "He has," thought he, "already freed himself from the worship of the millions of the Hindu gods and goddesses. If I can graft on his faith a belief in the Prophet, what a glory shall I win for myself and my faith!"

Discussion—God and Prophet.

Thinking thus, he tried to impress upon the Guru the spiritual necessity of having a mediator at the court of God and dilated upon the powers and greatness of the Prophet of Islam. The Guru calmly heard all that the zealous

Muslim faqir had to say. At last he smiled and said, "I believe in and worship the One alone. I need no second. No mediator is necessary If you join with Him one whom you call His Prophet, you cease to be a worshipper of the One alone. Why, then, should you denounce as *kafirs* or pagans those who join with Him two fifty, a hundred, some thousand or some millions? The difference is one of degree and not of kind They are like you in not worshipping the Peerless Lord alone"

"But," replied the faqir, "we do not believe him to be God We only believe that through his mediation we shall be saved from the consequences of our sinful acts He is not the end of our worship, but only the means, whereas the Hindus actually worship their deities Their thoughts do not rise above or beyond the objects of their worship. For them each one of the latter is God"

"But friend," said the Guru, "they, too, can say that they regard their gods only as intermediaries They can quote scriptures to show that they believe in One God alone They can as well aver that through these deities they hope to please and reach God.

"Yes," returned the faqir, "they may say so, but such is not their actual belief We actually believe that One God is the Creator and Sustainer of all and that He alone is worthy of our homage"

The smile on the Guru's lips became brighter. "No friend," said he, "you don't believe that one God is the Father of all mankind. If you did, how could you hate, oppress, persecute and murder your fellow-men? If you believed in one God and, at the same time, felt that the 'idolatrous Hindus were wrong in their faith, you could not have hated them as you do now, you could not have treated them as you treat them in your fanatic zeal for your religion. If,

in your view, they are misguided, your love for God should have roused in your hearts love and sympathy for these misled sons of God. God is Love. It is through Love that we can hope to reach Him. Hatred leads us away from Him. Methinks you do not really believe that the same God made you as made the unfortunate Hindus. How then can it be said that you believe in one God? There is something wrong with your belief and conduct."

The Day of Judgment.

The faqir found himself beaten on his own ground. He changed the topic, and said, "Do you believe in the Day of Judgment?"

"Yes," replied the Guru, "every one has to reap what he sows; has to be judged by his deeds."

"That is good," said the faqir, "but have you ever thought how unlucky will Hindus find themselves on that day? Muhammadans are buried after death. Their bodies are placed in the custody of the earth. When, on the Day of Judgment, the angel of God will blow his clarion, the earth shall deliver forth the dead lying in its bosom. They will then be conducted into the Paradise. But how different will be the fate of Hindus. Their bodies are burnt. The bones and ashes are scattered. How can they regain their bodies? They are burnt here and will, on that account, burn for ever in the fires of Hell."

"That is an idea, indeed," replied the Guru, "but you ignore one or two things. In the first place, the bodies of Muhammadans buried under the earth are changed to dust quite as well as those of Hindus Till your Day of Judgment no trace will be left of them. If they can rise in spite of all this, there is no reason why the bodies of Hindus should fail to rise. In the second place, if you think that Hindus incur the wrath of God on account of their bodies being burnt, well, then Muhammadans, too, cannot escape a

similar fate ; for even their bodies, too, get burnt, after all, in most cases."

" How do you say that ?" enquired the faqir.

" Thus," replied the Guru. "You know that potters are very fond of clay from old grave-yards as that is very tough. They dig up such places, shape the clay into pots and bricks, and set them to bake in furnaces. There thus burns the clay produced from the decay of Muslims' bodies, and, if your argument be true, cries aloud in great agony. But you are misled, my friend. These things that you talk of are beyond the comprehension of man. He alone knows them who created the universe and maintains and sustains it in His own way. Let us only love Him and His creatures. In that way alone can we hope to become acceptable to Him."*

The Guru's Gift.

What more could the faqir say ? He was silenced. After a while, the Guru smiled on him his gracious, illuminating smile and said, " Well, brother, in the path set before us by the Lord all are treated according to their deserts. Castes or creeds make but little difference. Don't be misled by the thought that because yours is the State religion in this land and because you can force it on others, you are, in any way, higher or better in the eyes of God. Throw to the winds all such narrow thoughts, jealous views, and man-made limitations. Drink at the Fount of Nectar if you get a chance to get at it."

The faqir was won. He bowed at the feet of the Guru and was blessed with the priceless gift of Name—of a life lived in a constant, steadfast communion with the Lord and in lovingly serving all His creatures.

Thus did Guru Nanak fearlessly face the most powerful of Muhammadan faqirs and won them over to his path.

* *Asa di Var.*

CHAPTER XXII

DUNI CHAND AND KARORIA

The Guru now turned towards the north. Waking the people to a life of the spirit, engendering in them a passion for love, service, and devotion, cooling and soothing many a fluttering heart, the Guru reached Lahore. He sat on the bank of the Ravi. Mardana played the rebeck and sang the Master's divine songs. Sometimes the Guru himself would lift his melodious voice and sing of the Lord and of man's duty towards Him and His creatures. Thus did the two sit on the bank of the Ravi, under the canopy of heaven, on the carpet of grass, in the bosom of Nature, in a steady unbroken communion with the Infinite Lord of the universe.

On the Ravi's Bank.

Gradually, charmed by the thrilling, soul-stirring music, and drawn by the loving, powerful personality of the Guru, people began to assemble round him. Many a diseased heart was made whole; many a restless soul was calmed and steeped in joy; many a dry, unfeeling wreck of man was infused with love and life.

Duni Chand's Invitation.

Duni Chand was a rich man who farmed the territory of Lahore from the Emperor. He heard of the Guru. Some invisible strings in his heart were touched at the mention of the name which was on everybody's lips. He went to the Guru and begged him to visit and sanctify his house. The Guru smiled and said, "Brother, servants of God like me are better away from rich, luxurious palaces. You may have to pay dearly for my visit to your palatial residence."

The Shradh.

The rich banker was performing a *Shradh* for his dead father. A hundred Brahmins and several sadhus and faqirs had been feasted and given rich presents. The Brahmins had assured Duni Chand that his father had had enough that would last him for a year. It was on such an occasion that he had invited the Guru. But the Guru's visit was not like that of the Brahmins and others who had partaken of the rich food served by Duni Chand. The Guru had gone there not to partake of the wealth which Duni Chand had in abundance and which he could give according to his pleasure. He had gone there to bestow on Duni Chand another and higher kind of wealth in which the banker was a veritable pauper. He had gone there to open out to Duni Chand the rich, inexhaustible treasures which sustain mankind both here and hereafter.

Observing the crowd of Brahmins and others who were being fed, the Guru asked Duni Chand what the matter was. Duni Chand replied that it was the *shradh* of his father.

"What is it for ?" asked the Guru.

"To feed my dead father's spirit," replied the banker.

"Have you satisfied his craving ?"

"I should think so," replied Duni Chand, "The head-Brahmin has assured me that the spirits of my father and other ancestors have all had enough that will last them for a year."

"And did you believe him ?" asked the Guru with a smile. "What a simple man you are ! How could the food eaten by these well-fed Brahmins have reached your father in the spirit world ? There seems to be no means of communication between the Brahmin's bellies and the other world. I tell you that your father's unsatisfied cravings for things of this earth are a source of constant torment to him. He wanders

madly about like a hungry wolf in search of satisfaction which he never can have."

Duni Chand heard all this with open mouth. A deep grief overcame him. "Really then?" asked he, "does my father suffer the torments of unsatisfied cravings in spite of all that I have been from year to year, bestowing on the Brahmins in his name ? Is he really a hungry wolf ?"

"You may convince yourself of that," replied the Guru. " Go out into the forest on the river's banks. You will see a wolf under a bush. Do not fear but approach and question the beast."

The Vision.

Duni Chand went in the desired direction. After having gone a few miles, he thought he heard his name repeated amid piteous groans. He approached the spot from where the sound appeared to come. Lo ! A famished wolf lay groaning there. Presently, the wolf disappeared. A man stood there. Duni Chand saw before him his father in his habitual dress of old. The materialized spirit of his father then told Duni Chand that nothing that had been given to the Brahmins had reached him. He was hungry as ever.

"But how did you come into such a state ?" asked Duni Chand.

"My own deeds and desires," replied the materialized spirit, " have brought me to this miserable plight. Having lived a life of self-aggrandizement in the world, I accquired the character of a hungry wolf who always runs madly about chasing his prey. No amount of wealth snatched from others satisfied me. Even during the last moments of my life on the earth I thought of nothing but of the chances of further acquisition which I had failed to utilize or which my death would prevent me from utilizing. Thus, even after I passed over into this world, I could not shake off my desires. I am

still the victim of my unsatisfied wolfish cravings. Now, through the grace of the divine personality that has sent you hither, I feel a cloud lifted from my path. I discern a beam of light beckoning me to higher spheres. I must go. I thank you for this my deliverance; for it is your love that has drawn to your house the Master who has thus rescued me from my lower self. Look there, he bids me go higher up. Remember, my son, that in this world of which I am an inhabitant now, man's progress depends on the thoughts and feelings that he cherishes and cultivates, the actions that he performs, and the character that he thus develops. Pray for me. Give to the needy a portion of your honest earnings. That will benefit both you and me. Go and adore the divine spirit that sits incarnate in your house. He will give a new, real life unto you. Live that life, think those thoughts, cherish those feelings, and do those deeds, which he prescribes. You will be happy both there and here."

The Strange Request.

Duni Chand returned to his house. In awe and reverence he bowed at the Master's feet and prayed for light. The Guru gave him a needle saying, "Take this needle and keep it for me in a safe place. I should take it back when we meet in the next world."

Duni Chand was in a confusion. The meeting with his father's spirit had greatly upset him. He was not in a fit condition to think just then. He took the needle mechanically. Going into the house, he offered it to his wife, saying, "The Master wants us to keep it for him. He says he will get it back from us in the next world. We should be careful lest we lose it."

His wife was a pious, thoughtful woman. She said, "My lord, the Master has set us a riddle. How shall we take the needle with us to the other world? All material things will remain here and our spirits will go alone. The Master must

have a purpose behind this strange request. Perhaps he will solve the riddle of life for us. Let us go to him, give back the needle, and pray for light."

Duni Chand and his wife went to the Guru, placed the needle before him, and begged him to take it back. "We cannot carry it to the other world, Master, though we would gladly carry heavy loads for you, if we could."

The Guru smiled and said, "What are those seven flags that fly on the top of your house ?"

Duni Chand, "According to the prevalent custom, they represent the wealth that belongs to me. Each flag stands for ten millions."

Guru Nanak, "So all this wealth is yours. How will you manage to carry it with you to regions beyond death ? Have you ever thought of the life to come and your needs in that life ?"

Duni Chand and his wife bowed their heads and said, "Pray then, bid us what to do with this wealth. Tell us what we shall need in the life to come and how we can manage to carry it thither."

True Treasures for the Soul.

Guru Nanak, "Give this wealth to the needy and poor. Earn an honest living with the sweat of your brow. Share your earnings with your needy neighbours. Love and serve all creatures as your brothers. Meditate on God and ever pray for His Grace. This wealth of Hari Name, of lofty noble thoughts and pious goodly acts of love and service, will help you in the life to come."

Thus were Duni Chand and his wife blessed with the gift of Hari Name. They became the disciples of the Guru. They distributed their wealth to the poor, converted their house into a *dharmsala*—a place of love, charity, and devotion—, and took a great delight in ministering to the

spiritual and bodily needs of all who met them. They became the Guru's torch-bearers, and showed the right path to many a 'forelorn shipwrecked brother sailing over life's solemn main'.

Visits Talwandi.

After a short further stay at Lahore, the Guru went to Talwandi. His old parents who, had so far regarded him as their errant son, were, during this visit, blessed with spiritual insight. They saw in him their spiritual guide and saviour. They gave up all thoughts of holding him within their four walls ; for they realized that he was meant for the whole of suffering humanity. Rai Bular was also comforted in his last days.

On the Ravi's Bank again.

Taking leave of his parents and disciples, the Guru started again on his misson. After a short tour of his native land he took up his post on a secluded, beautiful spot on the right bank of the Ravi. There in the lap of Nature with a wide expanse of open fertile land on one side and the slow-moving Ravi on the other, he ever lifted his voice in praise of God. He sang his matchless songs. He let his soul freely fly to the feet of the Lord and, for days together, cling to them in a calm rapture of heavenly bliss. People soon came to know of him. He sang to them of his Master, the Lord of the universe, and the good, loving Father of all. He sang to them of their duty to God on the one side and to their brethren on the other. They heard his divine songs. They listened to his inspired talks. Their hearts and souls melted in a sincere repentance for their past negligence. A thirst for the Lord was roused in them. His songs and discourses slaked this new-born thirst of their souls. They found their restless bosoms filled with ineffable joy. To lead a life of love, service, and devotion, became the master passion with

them. They went about their daily duties with the Name of the Lord enthroned in their bosoms and the Word of God as sung by the Guru ever seated on their lips.

Karoria.

The Guru's fame spread far and wide. Hindus, Muhammadans, hermits, ascetics, anchorites, men of the world, pirs, faqirs, farmers, landlords, and the rest, all came to him and became his disciples. Purified in mind and heart, with their souls knit to the Father above, they shed all their mutual hatreds and jealousies, and began to live like brothers. Karoria, a Khatri of Lahore and an official of the locality, did not like this change in the people. He was one of the 'natural leaders' of the people who had become tools of the tyrannical rule of the foreigners. He knew quite well that the authority of his masters would remain unquestioned and secure as long as people remained base and low in personal character, and broken up by feuds and jealousy in public life. How could he welcome this uplifting, liberating, and unifying influence which the Guru was coming to exercise over the people ? He felt that by founding his "association of God fearing republicans", the Guru was undermining his and his masters' authority. He determined to apprehend the Guru or to drive him away. Mounting on a horse and taking a posse of foot-men with him, Karoria started towards the Guru. But he could not go far. The people who heard of his resolve cursed him, some openly, and some in the secret of their hearts. Some took the courage to try to dissuade him. For a time he withstood all wise counsel. But his evil heart was soon in a violent agitation. His mind was in a whirlwind of confusion. He became bereft of his senses. Even the animal under him, influenced by the waves of love emanating from the Guru's heart, refused to move. Karoria's people now advised him to go humbly to the Guru and seek his blessing. He agreed at last. He alighted from his horse,

bowed in the direction of the Guru, and started barefoot to meet the Master. Reaching there, he fell at the Guru's feet. His whole being got steeped in a joy that he had never known before. A blessing, abiding peace descended on his soul. He tasted the life of the spirit. For three days he remained with him, feasting his eyes on the glorious countenance of the Master, nourishing his soul on the Word of God that flowed like life-giving waters from the throat of the Master, and, in that holy company of Guru Nanak and his disciples, purifying his mind and heart of all low passions and ignoble desires.

Kartar Pur.

In honour of the Guru, and in commemoration of his own emancipation from sin, ignorance, and suffering, Karoria founded a village on the spot which the Guru had sanctified by his presence. He named it after the Master's Master, no doubt in obedience to the Guru's wishes and called it Kartarpur, or the village of God, the Creator. He also built a dharmsala or temple of God therein. Both the temple and the village with the surrounding land he dedicated to the Guru. Here the Master stayed for some time. His father also came there with the family. The Guru put off his extraordinary costume and adopted the usual dress of the people around him He began and finished the day with divine Song and congregational service. The practice has since become universal with Sikhs After the morning and the evening services food was served to all from the Guru's langar or the free kitchen. No distinction of caste or creed was observed At this table of God all sat as brothers and sisters, as members of one well-knit family, all ministering to the needs and welfare of each, and each exerting himself ever to advance the good of all.

CHAPTER XXIII

TOUR TO THE WEST—MECCA

The Divine Impulse.

Having thus leavened the life and character of the people of the Punjab, and having founded a Holy Fellowship—an ideal community of Brothers, an association of God-fearing republicans—, and having established a centre from where could flow the Word of God sung by him and raise and transform all who came thither, the Guru made ready to undertake another tour. The divine call yet rang in his heart. It urged him to relinquish his life of rest, and carry the Word of God to the misguided people in different lands. So he started soon. This time he directed his steps to the West. Bhai Mardana was with him. He put on the blue dress worn by Muhammadan pilgrims to Mecca, took a faqir's staff in his hand, and a collection of his hymns under his arms. To complete the guise, he also carried with him a a jug—*lota*—for his ablutions and a carpet whereon to say his prayers. Thus dressed he appeared to be a typical *háji.*

In those days Surat was the port for the ships for Mecca. The Guru started in that direction. He travelled by short stages as was his wont ; for his was a tour for the purpose of sowing the seed of Name in the heart of mankind. He wanted to make people alive. His presence was needed everywhere. Like a blessing cloud in the rainy season, he went about irrigating with life-giving waters of Truth, Faith, Knowledge, and Love, the barren tracts of humanity that came within his way. In due course, passing through Sind, he reached Surat either directly on foot or on a ship via Karachi. Taking ship from there, he reached the Arabian

coast. Thence he marched towards Mecca where he reached in due course.

His Bold and Strange Conduct.

Reaching there, the Guru lay down to rest. In sore need of rest was he after that dusty tramp through the desert of Arabia. But even then the thought of his mission was uppermost in him. He would not waste a night. He knew how to attract people's attention. We saw him at Hardwar throwing water to the west when superstitious Hindus were throwing it to the east ; we know how at Kurkhetar he began to cook meat during a solar eclipse and thus horrrified the people ; and how he sat aloof when the Arti was being performed in the temple of Jagannath. In all these places his conduct had scandalized the people as being directly opposed to their beliefs and practices. Thus, even in crowded places, he had managed to get a hearing. Something equally horrifying to the 'Faithful' was done by him at Mecca. He knew quite well the superstitious regard of the Muhammadans for the shrine at Mecca. He knew that no Muhammadan would lie down with his feet in the direction of the *Ka'aba*. He was quite well aware of the hard-hearted bigotry and intolerance of the contemporary Muhammadans in general and the Qazis and Mullas in particular. He was conscious of the danger a man would run by injuring, in any way, the religious susceptibilities of the Muhammadans in their holy of holies. Yet the work ordained by the Lord had to be done. No thought of personal risk could deter him from the execution of his duty to God and man. Besides, he had full faith in his Master and an unshakable confidence in himself. He lived in God ; God lived in him ; how and whom could he fear ?

Where God is Not !

So, afraid of naught and eager to make people taste the life of the spirit which he had come so far to bestow on them, he did what no ordinary man could ever do. He lay down to rest with his feet towards the *Ka'aba*. As expected and desired by him, a loud uproar rose among the pilgrims at once. They swore at him. They threatened him. One of them who, having come from India, was more fanatic and rash than the rest, kicked him and said, "Who art thou, O Infidel, that thou sleepest with thy feet towards God ?" In a calm, sweet voice in which there was neither anger nor perturbation, the Guru replied, "Brother, be not so hasty and rash. I am tired and in sore need of rest. You may turn my feet in another direction in which God is not." Thereupon Jiwan, in great anger, seized the Guru's feet. The touch sent a mild shiver through his body ; but he was not in a mood to pay heed to such an experience. He dragged the Guru's feet in the opposite direction. He lifted his eyes and lo, the wonder of wonders ! The *Ka'aba* was seen to be standing in the direction in which the feet had been turned. He took up the feet again and pulled them into another direction. The *Ka'aba* was seen to follow. Round and round were the feet dragged, and round and round whirled the *Ka'aba*. "Don't you see," said the Guru to Jiwan, "that God dwells in all directions ? Indeed He is the life of all life and the light of all light. It is in him that the whole creation lives, moves, and has its being. Open your heart to Him, man. Be truly full of Faith." The Pilgrims saw this with wide, open mouths. Their horror and wonder knew no bounds. They were obliged to leave the Guru to his rest.

Hindus and Muhammadans.

By morning, he became the talk of the whole city. Qazis Mullas, Pirs, and Faqirs, of different lands, who were there on pilgrimage, crowded round him. Among them there were some from India, too. Makhdum Rukan Din of

Uch, Pir Baha-ud-din, Jati Lal, Shaikh Brahm, Kamal Din, and Jalal Din, were the chief among them. They wanted to have a religious discussion with the Guru. They had come to know that he hailed from India. Hence Rukan Din was chosen to lead the discussion. "Art thou Hindu or Muhammadan ?" was the first question.

"Neither," replied the Guru, "I am but a servent of God and a lover of mankind."

"But who is better and holier in your opinion, a Hindu or a Muhammadan ?"

"Neither in himself," replied the Guru, "It is not creed but life that can ennoble or degrade one. Man's advancement here and hereafter depends on the sum-total of the good that he does to his fellowmen, the amount of love and amity that he sows in the world, and the extent to which he can keep this soul pure and free among the allurements of this life. Acts, and not lip-professions, count in the spirit's progress to its goal. Creeds are but like fast fading dyes. They affect not the inner self of man. They dye not the soul in the shining hues of divine love. From what I have seen of Hindus and Muhammadans, I would make bold to say that neither of the two sects deserves to approach the court of God. There is no love lost between them. They revile and abuse each other. In their hearts there is no room for God who is all Love. Ram, the God of Hindus, and Rahim or Allah, the God of Muhammadans, appear to be two irreconcilable foes. To me it seems that neither of these sects worships God, the loving father of all. Rather, they worship the Devil, the spirit of evil and strife."

The Conquest of Love.

Long and serious was the discussion. All Qazis, Pirs, Faqirs, and Mullas, exercised their wits to defeat the Guru. But he was in constant communion with the Supreme Source of all Wisdom and Knowledge. His heart and

soul were ever open to the Divine Inflow which went gushing through his very pores. Who could defeat him? Soon all his interrogators were forced to acknowledge his greatness. They bowed before him and sought his instruction. Makhdum Rukan Din of Uch became the devoutest of his new disciples. In a short time the whole city resounded with the Guru's praises. His sweet divine songs were on everybody's lips. The Hindi Pir had conquered all of them by his sweet humility and all-embracing love.

After some time the Guru made ready to go. His new disciples—Qazis, Pirs, Faqirs, Mullas, and the laymen—all begged him to stay longer. But he had yet to carry his message to others in different lands. Their need was urging and drawing him on. So they had to resign to his pleasure. Makhdum Rukan Din at last begged for a souvenir. The Guru gave him his sandals.* These were kept respectfully in the Ka'aba for some time, but were, on his return to India, brought by Mukhdum Rukan Din to Uch. They are preserved as a sacred relic in the shrine of Uch in the Bahawalpur State and are shown to the faithful on special occasions.

Further North.

From Mecca the Guru moved on to Madina. There, too, the learned men of the place held a discussion with him. They, too, had to bow to him. All who heard the Guru's divine song and soul-inspiring discourse became his disciples. From there he travelled northwards and visited Egypt and other adjoining provinces of Africa. Bhai Gian Singh states in his *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa* that, during the Sudan expedition of 1885-86 against Mahdi, some Sikh soldiers saw, outside the southern gate of Kaikai, the platform where the Guru was

* The *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas contain the earliest authentic record about this visit The account given above is based on the said *Vars*.

said to have sat and discoursed with the king of the place. This platform is known there as that of Nanak Wali. Returning from Africa, the Guru went still northwards as far as Turkey in Europe.* About the tour to these places, however, there are no available records.

* *Cf.* S. M. Latif's "History of the Panjab," page 245 where it is stated, "A story is related of (Guru) Nanak's visit to Stamboul, and his interview with the Sultan of Turkey, who was noted for his cupidity and his extreme oppression of his subjects. (Guru) Nanak's admonitions had a great effect on the Sultan, who is said to have bestowed his hoarded treasures on the faqirs and the needy, and to have discontinued his tyranny over his people."

CHAPTER XXIV

VISIT TO BAGHDAD—I

At Baghdad. Retracing his steps southwards, he reached Baghdad in due course. A record of what happened there has come down to us in the works of the Sikh savant, Bhai Gurdas, as well as in those of other and later writers.

It should be remembered that Baghdad was another powerful centre of Islam where the mere presence of a 'Hindu' was regarded by the 'Faithful' as a stigma on their religious zeal. This will help us to have an idea of the supreme courage of the Master, who could not only fearlessly go among the most powerful bigots, but also ridicule their conception of religion in the strongest of their strongholds, religious and secular. We have seen how he had, at considerable personal risk, brought home to the people of Mecca that superstitious reverence for the sacred shrine was wrong, that God dwells in no particular direction or place but pervades everywhere. At Baghdad, too, he did some thing equally heroic.

Divine Music. A little outside the city he noticed a grave-yard with some well-kept tombs. He selected this spot for his stay. Early next morning, a watch before day break, he bade Bhai Mardana play the rebeck. For a time he sat quietly, enjoying the rich strains of music produced by his companion. Then he lifted his loud, melodious voice into a heavenly hymn of divine adoration. All Nature was hushed as if listening reverentially to the praises of her Lord. The melody travelled far on the wings of the still morning air. In that centre of Islam music had never

been heard before. It was a thing forbidden by the holy Law. All who heard it were astonished. Who could it be that had the courage to break the law of Islam in Baghdad? The music continued till day-break. Some passers by felt themselves irresistibly drawn to the place; for music appeals to every living heart. Even poisonous snakes forget to use their fangs when under the spell of music. These few Baghdadis who, in the sacred hours of early dawn, happened to hear the divine Song at close quarters, found that it had struck and set vibrating some invisible chords in the innermost depths of their hearts. They forgot their mundane affairs, they forgot their music-banning law of Islam, they forgot their own acquired aversion to music. They sat spell-bound, listening in mute adoration.

After a time, the Song ceased. They looked up at the divine singer. There was a glory in his countenance. Its radiance dazzled their eyes. Strange, subtle, strong vibrations emanating from him captivated them. They bowed to him, stranger though he was.

The Strange Azan.

The Guru then stood up erect. Placing a finger in each of his ears, as the Muhammadans do when about to shout the *Azan* or the call to prayer, he lifted his sweet, melodious voice and shouted as a Mulla would do. But his *Azan* was different from that of the Muslims. It contained the Arabic words about God and his greatness, but not the words declaring Muhammad to be His Prophet. The Guru also added some musical, rhyming words in Panjabi in praise of God. Here was another offence against the religion of the Prophet in that stronghold of Islam.

The *Azan* shouted in the stillness of the morning was heard far and wide. The voice was strange and unknown. The *Azan* was uncommon and perplexing. Not only did it

not contain the name of Muhammad, but at its end were some strange words which had been never coupled with the holy text. As long as the strange divine continued his *azan*, the people kept listening in mute astonishment. When he finished it, a huge uproar rose in the city. "Who is he that breaks the holy law of Islam? He has been singing near the holy tombs of great faqirs and has now distorted the *Azan*. A great *kafir* (Infidel) must he be. Severely must he be punished for this double offence."

Another Offence.

The few who had stood to hear his song now returned to the city. They informed their already scandalized co-religionists that the stranger who sat in the grave-yard had repeated to them a composition of his in his own tongue and had then explained it to them in their language. Therein he said that there were millions over millions of nether and upper regions, nay, they were so beyond reckoning that men got tired in their attempts to count them. That was another, still greater, offence against the holy Law. The very authority and truth of the Prophet and the holy book had been questioned; for, in the Quran, it was definitely said that there were only seven nether regions and only as many upper ones.

The Orders of the Pir.

Thus the Guru had broken the Law thrice. When these blasphemies were reported to the religious head of the place, he despatched some of his men to summon the Guru into his presence. On hearing the summons, the Guru smiled and said, "Go friends, and tell your master that persons who have given themselves up to God and entered His service will never heed such imperious commands of any man, howsoever formidable he may be. The Great Master, under whose orders this servant has come so far, permits no

leisure for indulging the fanciful whims of the potentates of the world. Tell the Pir that the Minstrel of God has come to sing to him of the Lord. Let him come and listen to the Word of God. It does not become him to exhibit his authority in dealing with a servant of the King of Kings."

The Pir's men returned and repeated to him what the Guru had said. Pride of power had rendered the Pir impervious to softer, nobler feelings He felt enraged at what he thought an insult offered to him in his own capital by a wandering 'Kafir'. The Guru had not only broken the Holy Law thrice that day, but had also disobeyed the summons of the highest Islamic authority of Baghdad Surely, he deserved no pity. The Pir pronounced the *Fatwa* that in the Law of Islam the punishment for such an offender was that he should be stoned to death by the Faithful. He exhorted the people to do their duty.

At his bidding, a large crowd took stones in their hands and marched towards the place where the Guru and Mardana were sitting in the lap of their Maker The violent, threatening aspect of the crowd at first perturbed Bhai Mardana. But the Guru bade him be of good cheer and watch the ways of the Lord. What fear could they feel who had handed themselves over to the Will of the Fearless and Fear dispelling Lord ?

When the crowd drew near, the Guru lifted his sweet charming voice and began to sing of the Lord. The angry, yelling crowd came near As they heard the Word of God, their hearts began to flutter, and their steps began to falter. Soon the arms that had been lifted to strike him became stiff and stationary where they were All who had come, yelling with rage and fury, to assault the Guru, stood dumb as cattle listening joyfully to his Songs of the Lord. Mute and calm they stood as if transfixed to the ground. Gradually

the storm in their hearts subsided. They felt drawn towards the Minstrel of God.

The Pir was sitting at home, musing on the courage of the Guru who could brave the Pir of Baghdad in his own capital. None had dared do that before. "I should like to see this brave stranger; but people will say that in going to see a Kafir, who has not only blasphemed our religion thrice but has also disobeyed my summons, I have lowered the dignity of Islam. I feel a strange urge within me to go to him. But perhaps he has been stoned to death by now. Perhaps I should try to save him."

The Pir Visits the Guru.

He was in such thoughts when some-one came to inform him of what had happened to those who had gone to stone the Guru. This news put on end to his hesitation. He got up and started towards the Guru. His young son accompanied him. As he approached the grave-yard, he heard the charming, musical voice of the Guru, who was singing extempore one of his soul-stirring Songs in the language of the Baghdadis. Soon the father and son reached the place where, on bare earth, sat the great Minstrel of God with his rebeck player. There was a smile of Love on the Guru's lips. His eyes, which were now directed towards the Pir, seemed to be shedding showers of blissful calm on all on whom they fell. The smiles of love on the Guru's lips, the look of divine grace in the Guru's eyes, captivated the heart of the Pir. Then did he understand drawn by what force he had, in utter disregard of the dignity of Islam or his 'high' office, come to have a look at the brave stranger. He bowed to the Guru and sat before him on the bare, sandy earth.

The Discussion: (a) on Music.

The people, who had long before thrown away their stones, now drew closer round the Guru to hear what might pass between him and their Pir. They were in a chastened mood. After a few words of greetings, the Pir

remembered the offences against Islam which had been alleged against the Guru. He resolved to discuss the points involved.

He asked the Guru why he loved singing. "Music," said he, "excites the passions. It is the sensualists' means of amusement and exhilaration. Religious people do not need such excitement of the mind and heart. They want inward poise and calm. They should shun music. Hence it is forbidden in our religion."

The Guru replied, "You have misunderstood the functions of music. Music is as potent a factor for good as for evil. It has a strange, subtle, powerful influence over the human mind. Music melts the heart and makes it pliable. It helps to collect the soul and raise it to white heat where lasting impressions can be stamped on it. It charms the mind, lulls the beating, restless heart, and tames the fractious beast in man. How can music be against any religion? It is surely not forbidden by the Great Artist who designed and made this universe. It is but the outward expression of the tune, pitch, and harmony which are found in the world of Nature, and which exist in and behind all life. Listen, how reeds, rushes, and trees in the forests, gushing brooks and running rills, chirping birds, the sighing, mourning winds, the humming bees and insects, and the spheres themselves are taking their characteristic part in the Divine Orchestra of Nature. Love of music is ingrained in the human heart. No amount of prohibitive orders can inhibit its display and exercise. Whenever a man is happy and alone—as a cow-bow in the meadows, a farmer at the plough, a Caravan man on his camel—, he hums to himself a tune. Hence, seeing all this, and recognizing the endless possibilities of music for good or evil, is it not wise to elevate the human instinct for music and to enlist it as a powerful helper in our efforts to fit men for the struggle against the ills and evils of life? Hence it is that

I sing, and teach others to sing, divine songs inculcating lofty ideals of life and worship and praising the Supreme Lord. This *Kirtan*, or divine music, attunes the soul of man to the Supreme Spirit in which we live, move, and have our being, and enables it to take deep draughts at the Fountain-head of all Life, Light, Love, and Joy. The baser proclivities of human nature are chastened and re-directed into higher moral channels. Thus purified and exalted, a man becomes a superman, one who lives in the Lord and in whom lives the Lord Himself. It is for this reason that with me music is a handmaid of religion. Moreover, your Prophet, too, was not averse to music; for it is recorded that he took his wife to a music hall. I wonder how you came to believe that music was against religion."

(*b*) **On the Azan and Prophet.**

The Pir was greatly impressed with what the Guru had said. But then he questioned the Guru about the second offence against Islam which had been alleged against him. "I can't imagine," said he, "that a devout man of religion like you should be inclined towards *kufar* and believe not in the last of the Prophets. How is it that you did not name him in your call to prayer?"

"For the simple reason," said the Guru, "that I am a worshipper of the Lord alone who hath none like Him. In not joining even the Prophet with Him I prove myself to be nearer the heart of the exclusive monotheism of Islam than the accredited followers of the Prophet. I wonder how you reconcile your uncompromising monotheism with your joining the name of your Prophet with that of the Lord. You condemn the Hindus as infidels because they join other deities with God. Why, you do the same, only in a lesser degree! Moreover, if you really believe in one God as the Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe, if your faith

bade you regard Him as present everywhere, how could you hate, oppress, and kill those who differed from you? If you regarded them as brothers born of the same Father as yourselves, but believed them to have gone astray, your love for God—your and their common Father—should have filled your hearts with pity, charity, and a fervent zeal to help and serve. Has it been the case with you? Is it not more correct to say that you believe not in one God but in one Prophet. You should remember that revelation is the monopoly of no man, nation, or age. You seem to believe that the truth proclaimed by your Prophet is the Truth—the absolute Truth. So you quarrel with those who differ from you in this. In consequence, you boast of loving and serving God, when actually you are only hating and oppressing your fellows. Is it as it should be?"

The Pir bowed his head and said, ' Truly hast thou spoken, O great Pir of Hindustan. Our belief and practice have greatly fallen The word of the Prophet has been widely misunderstood and misapplied. Fanatics and zealots have laid special stress on certain texts of the Holy Book and have ignored others. This is highly regrettable and I join with you in condemning all excesses which have been committed against humanity in the name of Islam. But I do not see how you can find it in you to contradict the word of the Prophet and declare that there are millions and millions of nether and upper regions."

(e) On Nether and Upper Regions.

"To that charge," said the Guru, "I plead guilty. I assure you, however, that in making the statement in question I spoke nothing but the truth. If you could purify your heart and fill it with love, and attune your soul to the Supreme Spirit that pervades and transcends the universe, you will surely

come to realize the truth of what I said about the limitless number of worlds and systems."

The youthful son of the Pir, who had heard all this discussion with rapt attention, now said, "But can't you, O True faqir of Allah, let another have a glimpse of the millions over millions of the regions? I am sure you can do so by the strength of your spiritual faculty. I fain would have such a glimpse, if you please."

"All right," said the Guru, "give me your hand. Now shut your eyes and think of God."

The youth felt himself to be flying up with the Guru at a tremendous speed. Up and up they went until he lost all sense of direction or time. In limitless space that was all round them he saw millions over millions of orbs and systems of heavenly bodies. Soon the youth's eyes got dazzled at having too long gazed at the bright stars of the upper and the nether regions. He felt as if he had been for years on the wing. So he begged the Guru to take him back to his father. He had seen enough to convince him of what the Guru had said about the number of the regions. They turned downwards. A little after, the young Pir opened his eyes and found himself seated beside his father in the grave-yard at Baghdad. He narrated his experiences to his wondering father and gave him the sweet food which he had brought from one of the regions visited by him in the company of the Guru.* When the son said that he had been flying for what seemed to be years, the father replied, "No, you have been asleep for a few minutes only; and seem to have been here all the time. But this sweet tells a different tale. There is also a change in

* Vide *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas. To those who may be inclined to smile at the height of, what they may term, blind faith exhibited in the above-given description of the young Pir's experiences is recommended a study of appendix B, to be followed up with further reading in the direction suggested there.

your looks, a change which tells me that you believe what you say. I wish I could have such an experience."

Lighting of the Holy Flame.

The Guru assured him that the knowledge divine was within his reach. He had only to cultivate faith seasoned with reason. If he could purify his mind and heart, and let his spirit fly to the feet of the Lord, he would feel the truth of all that the Guru had said. The Guru was thus able to decipher the Pir to himself, and awaken in him that spiritual faculty which all have but few use. The Pir was won. He fell at the Guru's feet and was blessed. He felt the lighting of a holy flame in his innermost being. All the people of Baghdad, who had attentively listened to all that had passed between the Guru and the Pir, also fell at the Guru's feet. He blessed them all with Name and made them spiritually alive.

CHAPTER XXV

VISIT TO BAGHDAD—II

Thus was conquered that stronghold of Islam.

The Platform. On the spot where the Guru sat and discoursed with the Pir and his people was erected, by one of the several faithful Baghdadi followers of the Guru, a platform which was enclosed in a spacious building. The building with the platform exists up to this day and was seen by the Sikh soldiers who visited the city during the last Great War. It is situated about a mile to the west of the city with the old grave-yard on its north and the Baghdad-Samara Railway line on its south. It has two rooms on the north end One of these contains the tomb of Behlol Dana. In a corner of the other room is the platform which is associated with the Guru's name. In the northern wall, beside this platform, there is an inscription in Turkish. Photos of this inscription have been taken and brought from there by several persons In the same room there is also the tomb of one Mohammad Pasha Arnaoot.

The Inscription. The language of the inscription is a mixture of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. On this account, it is open to more than one interpretation.* But in whatever way it may be translated.,

*Below are given two of such interpretations :—

1 "When Murad saw the building of Baba Nanak, the Prophet of God, fallen in ruins, he built a new one instead with the help of his own hands so that it may stand as a monument in history for generations to come, and that the meritorious act of his fortunate disciple may last for aye."

2. "Whoever saw this sacred place of Baba Nanak faqir was granted fulfilment of his heart's desire by the Great God and seven angels helped him. Its date lies in line :—"*Yapdi nawab ajra yara abi murid said*=he caused a spring of Grace to flow for his lucky disciple."

(For these interpretations I am indebted to Bhai Vir Singh's *Guru Nanak Chamtkar*.)

one or two things are quite clear from it. Firstly, that the building with the platform was erected by a faithful Baghdadi disciple of the Guru in commemoration of Guru Nanak's visit to that place. Secondly, that the Guru was adored and held in great esteem by the people of Baghdad. Thirdly, that the building was erected in 917 Hijira or 1511 A D. This is clear not only from the year given in figures at the bottom of the inscription, but also from its last (fourth) line which contains the date of the erection of the building. The last word of the third line makes it clear that the fourth line contains this date By substituting the respective numbers for the letters of this line we get a total of 917. This agrees with the year given in figures.

The Date of the Guru's Visit

This leads us to the conclusion that the Guru visited Baghdad some time before the year 1511 A.D. Another evidence also exists in favour of such a conclusion Swami Anandacharya has stated in his book, *The Snow Birds*, that in a shrine outside Baghdad he found an inscription which he translated as under :—

"Here spake the Hindu Guru Nanak to Faqir Bahlol, and for these sixty winters since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Bahlol has rested on the Master's word like a bee poisoned on a dawn-lit honey-rose."

This inscription also testifies to the great success which the Guru had at Baghdad. It also shows that when the Master left his disciples, he left with them his word, the divine song, on which their souls could rest and thrive. This Bahlol faqir was probably a successor of Bahlol Dana whose tomb exists in the room adjoining the one containing the Master's platform. He must have met the Guru in the same place where the Pir met him and where, in after years, some disciple of the Guru erected a building to commemorate the event. The inscription which the Swami saw was most probably

on the outer gate. The Sikh soldiers who visited the shrine during the Great War found that there was an inscription above the outer gate, but it had become worn off and illegible.

In the headline to the poem* which the Swami composed on reading the inscription it is stated that the inscription was dated 912 Hijira. This year can refer either to the year when the inscription was put up or to the event which the inscription commemorates—Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad. Now, the inscription makes it clear that it was put up sixty years after the Guru had left the place. If 912 A. H. or 1506 A. D. were taken to mean the year when the inscription was put up, the Guru's visit would fall in 1446 A. D. or twenty-three years before his birth. Hence we must take 912 A. H. to be the year of the Guru's visit to Baghdad.

*The whole poem is given below :-

"On reading an Arabic inscription in a shrine outside the town of Baghdad. Dated 912 Hejra.

"Upon this simple slab of granite didst thou sit, discoursing of fraternal love and holy light, O Guru Nanak. Prince among India's holy sons!

What song from the source of the Seven Waters thou didst sing to charm the soul of Iran!

What peace from Himalaya's lonely caves and forests thou didst carry to the vine-groves and rose gardens of Baghdad!

What light from Badrinath's snow peaks thou didst bear to illumine the heart of Bahlol, thy saintly Persian disciple?

Eight fortnights Bahlol hearkened to thy words on Life and the Path and Spring Eternal, while the moon waxed aud waned in the pomegranate grove beside the grassy desert of the dead.

And after thou hadst left him to return to thy beloved Bharat's land, the faqir, it is said, would speak to none nor listen to the voice of man or angel;

His fame spread far and wide and the Shah came to pay him homage but the holy man would take no earthly treasures nor hear the praise of kings and courtiers.

Thus lived he—lonely, devoted, thoughtful—for sixty winters, sitting before the stone whereon thy sacred feet had rested.

And ere he left this House of Ignorance he wrote these words on the stone: "Here spake the Hindu Guru Nanak to Faqir Bahlol, and for these sixty winters since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Bahlol has rested on the Master's word like a bee poised on a dawnlit honey-rose."

Thus it appears that the Guru visited Baghdad in 1506 A.D. and the building containing the platform with the other inscription was erected about five years later. This would mean that the tour to the west was undertaken in about 1504 A. D. and was the second of his great tours, the first one having been to the east. It may be stated that in all current biographies this tour is taken to be either the third or the fourth.*

Disciples' Love offering.

The Guru stayed at Baghdad for about four months as stated also in the above-said poem. During this period he converted to his faith all the Pirs, Faqirs, and others who came to him. Of course the conversion of their followers was automatic. He is also said to have met the ruler of the place and made him give up tyrannizing over his subjects. When the Guru made ready to go, his disciples of Baghdad presented to him a robe as a token of their reverence and love. On it were written some verses in Arabic. This robe or *chola* is believed to be the one preserved by the Sikh priests of Dehra Baba Nanak in the modern district of Gurdaspur.

Further Travels.

Leaving Baghdad, the Guru visited Baku, Tuhran, Asfhan and other places in Persia. Thence he went into Turkistan. There he visited Bukhara, Tashkan, Kashgar, Yarkand, Samarkand etc., and then entered Afghanistan. A Sikh temple at Kabul preserves the memory of the Guru's visit to that place. Another Gurdwara at the water springs of Askara, about nine miles from Kabul, is also associated with the Guru's name. But not much is known about the Guru's tours in these parts.

*It is possible that Swami Anandacharya might have misread the last digit of the date which might have been 917 and not 912. In that case the Guru's visit to Baghdad will have to be taken to have happened in 917 Hijra or 1511 A.D. This tour would, then, be the third of Guru Nanak's great tours.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE HOLY HAND PRINT

Wali Qandhari.

In due course the Guru returned to India. Passing through Peshawar, he crossed the Indus and entered the Panjab. Not long after, he reached Hasan Abdal situated about thirty miles from the modern town of Rawalpindi. He halted near the base of a bleak mountain outside the town. On the top of the hill there then lived a Muslim faqir named Wali Qandhari. He had made himself a little house beside a spring that existed there. That was the only spring in the locality, and hence, the only source of water supply for the people near-abouts. Wali Qandhari, who was a petty-souled occultist, was cut to the quick when he heard that the Guru had acquired a great name and following in the locality. Some of the Wali's own disciples also spoke to him very highly of the spiritual greatness of the Guru. This incensed the shallow-hearted faqir. He vowed to make the whole town with their new Guru die for want of water. He closed the outlet of the spring whereby water used to flow down to the people below. This was not the first time that he had given vent, in this way, to his wrath against his neighbours of Hasan Abdal. The whole town was plunged in sorrow. All entreaties failed to appease the faqir's anger born of jealousy. "Go to him" said he, pointing in the direction of the Guru. The people were in great distress. They refused to let Bhai Mardana have a drink from their little stores of water. "Why not implore your master for it ?" said they.

The Guru had hoped that the Wali, who called himself a seeker of God, would relent. But he soon found that the faqir's heart was as bleak as the mountain over which he lived. The Guru would not work a 'miracle' if he could avoid it, *i.e.*, he would not employ his spiritual powers unless it was found absolutely necessary for the benefit of the people. So he resolved to try what appeals in the name of God could do to rouse mercy in the heart of the Wali. He sent Mardana, who felt awfully thirsty, to request the Wali to give him a drink and to let the water flow down as before. The Wali, however, haughtily refused to let Mardana have a drop. "Go to him," said he, "if he has the powers which the foolish people credit him with, he can surely end their misery by digging up a fresh spring. If he has no such power, let him come to me in person and give up deceiving the people." He said more in the same angry tone.

Mardana's Entreaties.

Mardana returned, thirsty as he was, and told the Guru how he had fared. The Guru sent him again and charged him to use great humility of address and demeanour in making the appeal on behalf of himself and the inhabitants of the town. Three times did Mardana go and three times was he turned back without a drop to drink. Then the Guru lifted a small stone near which he was sitting and asked Mardana to dig there for a spring of clear, cool water was flowing underneath. Mardana did as bidden. A stream of crystal water came out from the place and washed the Guru's feet. The Wali's spring dried up simultaneously The new spring was larger than the old one on the bleak hill. Water began to flow in numerous channels and to irrigate the barren land all around. Thus did the Guru not only release the people from the tyranny of the Wali of Qandhar, but also made them happy and prosperous by providing them with an abundant, constant supply of cool, clear water.

A New Spring

The Holy Hand Print.

Wali Qandhari was angrier still. In great wrath he hurled a huge rock at the Master. It came down rolling and rumbling terribly. The Master was cleaning his teeth with a *datan*. When he saw the fast advancing rock, he lifted his arm with the hand opened out in order to check the rock. It struck his hand and stood still in its downward career. An impression of the open hand of the Master was made on the rock at the point of contact. It exists up to this day and is called the *Panja Sahib* or the Holy Hand Print.*

Divine Discourse.

Wali Qandhari's pride was humbled. He came down to meet the Guru. He bowed at his feet and begged forgiveness for his folly. The ever-generous Guru, who despised no sinner but only felt pity for him at his fall and did all he could to lift him up from his degradation, not only forgave the Wali of Qandhar, but also opened his erstwhile dry, callous, haughty heart to the Divine inflow. "Don't forget," said the Guru, "that God is Love. He that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in Him. He in whose heart there is no place for Love can never know what God is. Hence he can never know true joy or lasting peace. If you remember this, you will ever try to serve your fellowmen for they are all His children. You will not find it possible then to sit aloft over a mountain, careless of the woes and ills of mankind. You will do your humble bit to alleviate and relieve them. You will mix with the people, be one of them, share their joys and sorrows, and lift them to the feet of God. Doing this, you will be truly religious, for ture worship comprises love, service, devotion—noble thoughts, humane feelings, kindly acts, and devout prayer."

*See *Occult Science in India* by Louis Jacolliot where authenticated instances are given of heavy material objects being moved about by spiritual force alone.

Wali Qandhari's heart was purified and invigorated with a new life. On the place where the Guru sat stands a beautiful Gurdwara called the *Panja Sahib* or the Holy Hand Print. Years ago, the rock was continuous right to the place where the Guru had sat and imprinted his palm in the rock If anybody then stood at the top of the hill, near the Qandhari's hut, and looked down towards the Panja Sahib, the rock presented an appearance which convinced the observer that it must have been thrown ; for it looked like a pile that had been pushed and that had gone rolling down till suddenly stopped in its downward career. Many people, who saw it then, testify to this impression. But now the rock round the Panja Sahib has been cut away to make room for a road and some buildings including the Gurdwara.

After a few davs' stay at Hasan Abdal the Guru returned to his home at Kartarpur.

CHAPTER XXVII

TOUR TO THE SOUTH

The call of humanity and God which he had heard in his youth at Sultanpur was yet ringing in his ears. He had been to the east as far as Burma and to the west as far as Egypt, Turkey, and Russian Turkistan. In all these places he had been to the strongholds of the Hindu and Muhammadan religions, had met the learned men of both sects, and had shown to them how they were not what they professed to be. To every one that he met on his travels he brought home the lesson that it was not creed, not lip-profession, not even a belief in this or that saviour, that could help man in his journey through this life or the one to come: it was right thought, right feeling, and right act and effort, that could help man in his career. Creeds were things of this world. They helped only to divide man against man. It was character which accompanied man in his journey beyond the grave. So, wherever he went, he reformed men's character. The burden of his teaching was, "Truth is greater than everything else but higher still is true living."* It was true life that he taught people to live, a life in which the spirit was in constant attunement with God, the human faculties were in complete accord with and subservient to the spirit, and the human body was at the command and within the control of the ever-poised mind and soul.

Pirs, Faqirs, Mullas, Pandits, Brahmins, Yogis, and scholars had met him and tried to defeat him in argument. The Guru had touched some inner chords in their hearts and made them see the divine spark which glows and burns in the depths of every human heart but

* *Sri Rag, Ashtpadi*

which gets clouded and shrouded in thick deep layers of worldly delusion. In all places he had charged his disciples to carry to others the message of life, love, light, and joy, that he had conveyed to them. In this way, the purifying, uplifting, and unifying movement that he had started was carried on after him in all places that he visited.

Starts Southwards.

He had visited east and west, but regions to the north and south yet remained unvisited. So, hearkening once more to the call of God and humanity, he made ready to go towards the south. Mardana was ordered to stay at Kartarpur and sing to the disciples and seekers the Divine Songs of the Master. Several noted Sikhs like Bhai Bhagirath also stayed behind to serve the people and preach to them, by precept and example, the lofty ideals which the Guru had not only set before them but had actually shown them realized in his own life

The Pirs of Sarsa.

Taking with him two Sikhs named Saido and Siho, the Guru started towards the south in about 1511 A. D. His dress was extraordinary this time, too. He wore wooden sandals on his feet; twisted a rope round his head, arms and legs; took a faqir's staff in his hands; and put a patch and streak on his forehead. Thus quaintly dressed, he proceeded to the south. Passsing Bhatner, Bhatinda, etc., he reached Sirsa in the mordern district of Hissar. There he met a group of Mohammadan faqirs who were generally believed to possess great occult powers and were consequently held in great awe by the people of that locality. They misled the ignorant people, whom they taught to look upon faqirs and Mullas as their saviours. Like other faqirs, they, too, did all they could to bring Hindus into the fold of Islam.

They gathered round the Guru. Khwaja Abdul Shakur was at their head. They came resolved to defeat the Guru in argument and thereby to augment their own influence as the conquerors of one who had till then conquered all whom he had met. They would thus be doing a service not only to themselves and their fellow-faqirs, but also to the cause of Islam, as the Guru's teachings were already becoming an obstacle in the free spread of Islam So, desiring to lower him in the eyes of the people, the faqirs asked the Guru if he had performed penances worthy of a man of religion. The Guru replied that he had no need for them. "Penances," said he, "are useful when over-indulgence in sensual pleasures has spoiled the body and soiled the heart. They can be of help in the task of purifying the mind and heart and cleansing the body of unhealthy, disease-producing elements. But they are ever to be regarded as mere means to an end. It is wrong to make penances the be all and the end all of religious life. It is a sin to torture and deform the body and cripple and crush the human heart How can the soul be strong when its vehicle is made unfit for its work ? Of course, it is equally bad to starve the soul and pamper the body. The mind of man is restless like a wild deer that ever runs after soft, delicate blades of grass. It is ever on the wing in pursuit of this or that object. It has to be controlled, no doubt. But the way of penances chosen by you is too arduous to be undertaken by all. Moreover, it is not a sure means to achieve the desired success ; for it is generally aound that men given to penances and renunciation of the world's things begin to feel proud of their performances. They begin to deride others who cannot go the fame way with them. A heart full of pride, contempt, and hate, is but ill-fitted to receive the Divine Guest Mine is a far easier path. I believe that when the Love

Penances, Their true function.

for the Lord gets a foothold in the heart of man, he cannot be allured by the idle, sensual pleasures of this world His mind and heart, in fact all his faculties, are then directed in one channel—the path that leads to the Abode of the Blissful Lord. A man in whom Divine Love has waken, whose parched soul has become a thirst for God, can never go astray. All his senses are completely under his control. He can live on elements finer than air, and without food as we know it. Yes, he can dispense with food and sleep for as long as he likes, and still feel no discomfort. Therefore, he abhors penances and self-tortures. Rather than cripple and disable the body, he employs it in the service of his fellows."

The Fast.

The Muhammadan faqirs realized that they could not defeat him in argument. So they invited him to join them in a forty-day fast and penance; for they believed that he would not be able to bear thirst and hunger so long. The Guru wanted to humble their pride so that they might be in a mood to listen to his Word of God So he said, "Let it be as you please." All of them, thereupon, retired into as many cells, each taking with him a jug of water and forty grains of oats. The Guru dispensed with these even. After forty days the faqirs came out lean and famished. But the Guru was hale and hearty as before. Rather, the undisturbed communion with the Lord that he had enjoyed for forty days had added to the glory of his person. When the faqirs saw this, they felt convinced of the truth of his words that man lives not by bread alone. They fell at his feet and begged for light. He bestowed on them the gift of the Name and awoke them into the true life of the spirit. He taught them how to live in the world, derive needed nourishment from it, and yet be ever above it, verily like the lotus in water.

He stayed there for over four months. On that site

stands a Gurdwara in commemoration of his visit and victory. The cells of the faqirs are also pointed out to the pilgrims to this day.

At Narsinghpur.

From there he moved further south. Passing through Bikaner, Ajmer, Jaisalmer, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udhepur, Indore, Hoshangabad, etc., he crossed the river Narbada and entered Maharashtar. After a tour of that country he went onwards and reached Narsinghpur. It was inhabited by people called *Vanjaras*. The only son of their chief had died just then. The whole city was in mourning. The Guru sang to them one of his quieting, soothing, inspiring, uplifting Songs. Their grief was assuaged. They became reconciled to the Will of God, the Giver and Taker of life and everything else. The whole clan of *Vanjaras* entered the Path. Their descendants hold him in high esteem to this day.

The Cannibals

The Guru continued his missionary tour further into the Deccan. He visited all important places on the way. Whenever he heard of misguided men wielding and misusing religious or secular authority and misleading and oppressing the people under them, he made it his special duty to visit and reform such oppressors and false, blind leaders. He was told that, in a wide wilderness thereabouts, there lived a tribe of cannibals. Kauda was their chief. Their inroads into the surrounding territory had thrown the people into panic. The Guru's compassionate heart was touched. The divine call, which had ever been urging him on, he now felt to be pointing out to him the way to the cannibals' dens. When his new disciples tried to dissuade him from his contemplated journey into the land of the man-eaters, he replied, "Why friends, there are many thirsty souls there that need the Nectar. Shall I go by without ministering to their needs? I shall go to them: for they need me." When they said, "They will

kill and eat you," he quietly replied, "Then their physical hunger will be satisfied, though I should prefer to satisfy the hunger of their souls. Fear not, God is great and merciful. I shall do my duty by them."

Kauda, the Man-eater.

So he made for the place where Kauda, the chief of the cannibals, was reported to have his ambush. The place was soon reached. Kauda rejoiced to behold three well-fed men approaching his den. He smacked his lips and began his preparations to receive the 'visitors'. A huge cauldron of oil lay in place on a smouldering fire. He lit up the fire and waited for his 'victims'. They came up and stood looking at him. He had planned to spring on them and hold them fast; but now nothing of the sort was necessary. They showed no signs of an intention to flee. He felt the oil. The fire seemed to have lost its heat; for the oil was even cooler than it had been before the fire had been lit. At last, despairing of ever being able to make the oil boil, and wondering at the strange experience, he decided to roast one of his victims directly on fire. Finding the Guru to be the nearest, he caught him in his arms. The Guru smiled and said, "*Sat Kartar.*" Kauda was puzzled. None of his victims had ever behaved thus before. He threw him into the fire. It did not burn him. He stood in the fire smiling at Kauda. The chief of the cannibals could withstand no longer the charm of that smile. A mild shiver went through his body. The Guru stepped out of the fire.* Kauda made no effort to push him back. His mind seemed to have lost all power to think and initiate action, just as the fire had lost its power to burn. He stood in mute stupefaction. Presently, he looked up at his strange 'victim'. He

* Modern psychic and spiritual research shows that such things do and can happen in these days, too. See Appendix B.

found that his face was bright with a glory that he had nowhere seen before; that the strange man of glory stood with eyes shut and face upraised. In this posture he looked the very image of Peace and Bliss. A sweet, melodious voice was then heard lifted into a divine song. Kauda sat with folded hands. A heavy, crushing weight seemed to be slowly rising from over his breast. A dark, thick, terrible cloud seemed to be bursting before him to admit refreshing rays of light into the murky chamber of his inhuman heart. Something previously dead within him seemed to come into life. He felt the lighting of a holy flame within his heart. Kauda found his lost spiritual faculty and the Master found his lost disciple. Kauda bowed at the Guru's feet. The touch of those feet sent a fresh thrill through his body and rekindled his soul. Entrusting Kauda with the duty of reclaiming others of his tribe, the Guru moved on. From an eater of men he became a teacher and servant of all his fellow-beings.

Shivnabh's Love.

After a circuitous tour through the chief cities and holy places of the Deccan, the Guru reached Cape Comorin. From there he crossed over to Ceylon. Shivnabh, the king of the Island, had heard of the Guru from a merchant Sikh and had become his devoted disciple. The Guru's Songs of God sung to him by that merchant, Mansukh, had soothed his heart but had also stirred his soul with a powerful longing to see the Heavenly Singer who sang of the Great Bounteous Lord in such inspired and inspiring words. All that the merchant had told him about the Guru had only served to whet the edge of the Raja's yearning to see the Master. He had wanted to accompany Mansukh to the Panjab and lay himself at the feet of the Guru. But Mansukh had counselled him to love and wait in faith. "The Master is drawn," said he, "across distances great by

the invisible strings of his disciples' love. Only let thy love be deep, steady, and sincere. He will as surely come to you as the sun will rise in the east to-morrow. He does not like that people should neglect or give up their daily duties in their uncontrolled zeal for a life of the spirit. He would like you to carry on your kingly duties in a spirit of love and service. Besides, who knows to what regions he might have gone ? He is ever on the wing in pursuance of his self-chosen, heaven-ordained task of saving mankind from the clutches of its evil propensities. So, as I said, love and wait. He will come. The force of your love will find and draw him to your place."

His Despair.

So Shivnabh had loved and waited. The thing had got wind. Several imposters had come and posed as the Guru. But all of them had failed to satisfy the yearnings of his soul. He had begun to despair. The imposters had made him cautious Thenceforth he had issued orders that all who came to his city, posing as Guru Nanak, should be subjected to various tests. Rich food and drinks of all sorts were provided. Beautiful damsels were sent to dance before them, to serve them, and to use their arts with them. None had been able to withstand these temptations. Shivnabh's despair had grown deeper with the lapse of time.

The Test.

It was at such a time of doubts and despair that the Guru reached there and took his seat in a garden of the king. Attracted by the divine music and the magnetic personality of the Guru, people came to him in large numbers. Shivnabh also heard of the quaintly dressed Sadhu who, with two companions, was putting up in one of the royal gardens and was drawing all people to him by his Songs and discourses. But Shivnabh had been duped many times in the past. He would not go himself, or believe the stranger to be the Guru, until he had

tried and tested him. Beautiful damsels were sent to the Guru towards the close of the day. All others who sat round the Guru were ordered to leave. None else was allowed to enter. The Guru and his companions were thus left alone with the unholy, fair young charmers. They began to dance and employ their arts and blandishments. The Guru looked up with a stern, loveful look, as a father looks at a prankish, erratic child, and bade them sit and think of God. Those who had come to conquer were themselves conquered on beholding the Master's Glory. The Guru's look penetrated deep into the depths of their hearts and cleansed them of all their evil inclinations. They bowed before the Guru, experienced a sense of elation unknown before, and returned transfigured to their master, the king.

Fulfilment at Last.

Shivnabh had only to look at their faces to convince himself. Their eyes were bright with a strange delight. Their faces glowed with the radiance of the divine spark which, hidden so long in the depths of their hearts, had now been fanned into life by the Guru's holy breath. Shivnabh needed no further tests. "At last he has come," said he and danced in glee. He took his son and queen with him and went to the garden. The damsels were right. The sight of the Guru's loving, peaceful, radiant, inspiring countenance was enough to lay all doubts at rest and to soothe and quieten all thoughts of despair. It was he, the long expected Divine Guest. He laid himself prostrate at the Guru's feet. A thrill of new life and joy passed through his being. All vain wandering and restless longings of the heart were laid at rest for ever. His faith and patient waiting were rewarded. The Master himself had come across numerous forests and rivers and over thousand miles of wild, desolate land to fulfil the loveful longing of his disciple. The thought made him cling to the Master's feet still more fervently and wash them with tears of joy and gratitude.

The Bliss of Union.

The prince and the queen also bowed at the Guru's feet and obtained his blessings. All the three rose at the bidding of the Guru. For a pretty long time they sat quietly, feasting their eyes, hearts, and souls, with the heavenly sight before them; enjoying the holy presence through every cell and pore of their bodies, and drinking unutterable joy at every breath. At last, the king took courage to break this blissful silence. With folded hands he prayed, "Having come so far to bless thy unworthy but lucky slaves, will you walk a little further? Will you enter the city and sanctify with thy presence the home of thy happy slaves?"

"No friend," replied the Guru, "I am all right here." But the king persisted in his entreaties. The Guru smiled and said, "All right, I shall go; but I won't go on foot."

"Why should you walk, Master? A horse, a horse and six, or an elephant, or whatever else you desire, shall be sent for."

"But I should like to ride on the back of a king."

"Nothing more pleasant or blissful, my Master. Come, I shall blithely carry you on my back through the city so that all may know the immensity of my joy."

Shivnabh Enters the Path.

Shivnabh sat in the necessary posture and invited the Guru to be true to his word. The Guru was glad at the king's devotion. He bade him go and build a *dharmsala* near the palace. He would not go into the palace but would go into the *dharmsala* when it was ready. The building was soon completed. The Guru went and took his lodging there. People now flocked to the place to listen to his soul-stirring, peace-giving, joy-inspiring Songs of the Lord. The whole city and its suburbs bowed before the Guru and entered the

Path. Shivnabh, as the most devoted of them all, was entrusted with the duty of preaching the Master's mission in the country.

After a time the Guru bade farewell to Shivnabh and made a tour of the whole Island. In all places he was welcomed and listened to with delight. The whole population of the cities visited by him embraced his faith. and began to sing the Word of God as sung by the Guru.*

* During his stay with Raja Shivnabh the Guru composed the *Pransangli*, a metrical composition "containing an account of the silent palace of God, the manner of meditating on Him, the private utterances of the Guru, and the nature of the soul and body". It was taken down by one or other of his two companions. When the Guru departed from Shivnabh, he left the *Pransangli* there with the instruction that if anybody came for it from the Panjab, it was to be given over to him. When Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru, began to collect the writings of his predecessors for the compilation of the Granth Sahib, he sent Bhai Paira to Ceylon to bring him the above said composition of Guru Nank. We do not, however, find it in the Granth Sahib. Probably, the copy which Bhai Paira brought was not the genuine one or was incomplete and was, therefore, rejected by Guru Arjan.

On his return, Bhai Paira narrated his experiences and observations of his long journey. A gist of the narrative was taken down by Bhai Banno in his copy of Guru Granth Sahib and exists to this day This is a very valuable record from the historical point of view, as it establishes certain points beyond all doubts, *e.g.*, the visit of the Guru to the Deccan and Ceylon, the establishment of several centres of the Sikh faith in those parts, and the fact of Raja Shivnabh's having embraced Sikhism. At the time of Bhai Paira's visit, a grandson of Shivnabh was the ruler of the place. A free kitchen was being run at the Dharmsala which Shivnabh had built for the Guru. Thousands were fed there every day. Bhai Paira found a good many centres of Sikhism in the Deccan where the Guru was fondly loved and remembered by thousands who sang his Songs and devoutly followed the path which he had shown to them,

CHAPTER XXVIII

RETURN FROM THE SOUTH

Thereafter the Guru retraced his steps. Taking ship at Japapatan, he crossed over to the mainland. Passing through Rameshwaram, Nagapatan, Tanjaur, Begumpura, etc., he made a tour of the locality. He visited all important places. Everywhere people came flocking to him. They saw the divine glory of his countenance, heard his Songs of the Lord, and became transfigured in heart, mind, and soul. They found glowing in their own hearts the divine spark in search for which they had vainly run so long after Yogis, Pirs, and Pandits. At a graceful glance from the Guru they learnt the art of living pure and unpolluted amid the impurities and pollutions of the world. Everywhere the Guru established a *dharmsala* and entrused the work of reclaiming others to the most devoted of the disciples in each locality. Many of those *dharmsalas* exist to this day.

The Sidhs of Kajli Ban.

At a distance of about a hundred miles from Bijapur was a dense forest called Kajli Ban. The Guru learnt that in that forest there was a big, well-known Yogis' home. Sidhs of the place commanded a great influence in the localilty. By a show of supernatural powers, by a display of severe self-tortures, and by playing upon people's superstitions in various other ways, the Yogis had made themselves objects of awe and worship. Fearing their wrath, and, at the same time, hoping to gain the objects of their worldly desires, the people of the surrounding locality made big offerings at the shrine of the Sidhs or Yogis. If they failed to supply all

needs of the Sidhs, the latter knew how to exact what they wanted. Thus they were a type of oppressors who lived as parasites on the earnings of other people.

To release people from the snare of such pseudo-religious persons, to liberate such misguided and misguiding oppressors from the bondage of their benumbing, soul-killing practices, and to awaken them all to a true life of the spirit, was ever the desire of the Guru. So he directed his steps towards the Yogis' Home. Reaching there, he sat a little way off from the main gate. It was a secluded spot in the lap of Nature. Listening to the rich music of the million-throated Nature, contemplating the beautiful scenery that lay spread before him in an immese variety of hue and form, the Guru let his collected soul rise to the bosom of the Lord. He sat for hours in an ecstasy of unspeakable calm and joy. At break of day people from the neighbourhood came to the shrine to make their offerings to the Sidhs and obtain their blessings. As they passed by the Guru and his two companions, they felt a subtle, strong desire to sit by the lovely strangers and feast their eyes on the glorious countenance of the Guru. Some of them obeyed the mysterious, new-born inclination of their hearts and sat around the Guru. Sitting there, they found such sweet joy in a mute contemplation of the Guru's person that they forgot all about their intended, customary visit to the Yogis' Home. Several others assembled round the Guru on their return from the shrine.

Bharthari Yogi.

Soon, the Sidhs of the Ashram came to know of the mysterious, quaintly dressed stranger who had, without uttering a word, drawn and kept as if spell-bound scores of their devotees. Their chief, whose name was Bharthari, came out to have a look at the stranger. But a glance told him that the stranger was no stranger but the one for whom he had been

waiting since long. In one of his trances this great Yogi had learnt of Guru Nanak's advent into the world and had received an assurance that he would come to the Ashram and remove his doubts and clear his visions. Bharthari approached the Guru, saluted him with a bow, and sitting before him enquired, "O great one, what is thy name, what thy country, and what is it that has brought thee hither?" One of the Guru's companions replied, "He is Guru Nanak; the whole world is his country; and his occupation is to go from land to land, giving to all the message of the Lord from whom he has come, and awakening them to life of the spirit." Bharthari's eyes sparkled with joy for he found that his intuition had not deceived him. He bowed in gratitude and said, "God be thanked that I have seen thee at last. Long and intense has been my waiting for thee."

His Problem.

The Guru welcomed him with a benign smile. The Yogi then continued, "Severe and long have been the penances which I have performed in order to cleanse my heart and mind of all earthly longings; for without such cleansing, it is impossible to get absorbed in worship and devotion. But, in spite of all my efforts, I feel not the joy that should come from a sense of union with the object of worship, or even from a conviction that one is on the right path leading to such a union. If Yoga is thus futile, what else has to be done to slake the soul's thirst for the Lord? We Yogis drink wine in order to forget the world and its temptations. Thus we try to concentrate our thoughts on the Eternal Reality. But that method, too, is not quite efficacious; for when the effect of the wine is gone, we are as far away as ever from the joy that is to be had in poise and calm. Is it possible to cultivate an attitude of constant, unbroken detachment from the world? For, without such an attitude towards the world, it is impossible to grow and develop the love of the Lord in our.

hearts. Thus I find myself in a fix. Yoga with all its practices has failed to take me towards the goal. Should I give it up ? 'But in favour of what other mode of worship?' is the question. I feel it in my heart that you will free me from these doubts and set me on the right path. Will you have pity on me and do so ?"

The Guru's Path to Peace.

The Guru replied to the questions of Bharthari in two Songs in Asa Rag which are incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib. They may be freely rendered as below :—

"O veteran seeker after an attunement, learn that to attune one's self to the Supreme Reality is to attain to a state of natural and everlasting poise, union, and harmony. But this state is not to be attained by the performance of austerities and penances. Meditation on the Eternal Lord is the means for this eternal attunement which becomes a part of man's nature, and a perfectly natural and effortless condition. In your system of *Hath Yoga*, the fruit of the desired attunement is a prolongation of life ; but, by being ever in tune with the Infinite in the manner that I prefer, a man enjoys the bliss ofSupreme Knowledge. The Eternal Name, which is the never-failing means of obtaining everlasting attunement, is to be had by hearkening to the Guru's Word of God, by making it pierce and hold the mind and heart as your ear-rings pierce and hold your ears. With the Word of God enthroned in the heart and soul, the seeker has to put on the garb of charity, forgiveness, and sweet humility in his dealings with his fellowmen. Whatever happens to him, or occurs all round him, he implicity takes as the doing of the Father above and bows before His Will ; for he knows and feels that all that He does is good and for good. This is *Sahaj Yoga*, the natural, effortless everlasting attunement whose fruit is supreme Poise and Bliss. Instead of the various postures of the body enjoined in your Yoga,

I advocate the restraining of the mind from evil, futile thoughts. The sweet notes, that you blow on your horn, morning and evening, I replace by the sweet music that ever plays in the soul on account of its steady, steadfast attunement with the Lord. Instead of keeping a staff and a dry, hollowed-out pumpkin in the hand, I put my mind under the control of clarified intellect and keep the latter under check by means of the Supreme Knowledge obtained through the grace of the Guru. To regard the allurements and attachments of the world as insignificant like the dust is to smear the body with ashes. Ever to sing the praises of the Lord should be the constant occupation of the seeker. My renunciation consists in surrendering the will and intellect to the guidance of the Divine Will. To discern the manifestation of the light of the Supreme Lord in all the countless forms and hues of creation, to be ever in tune with the Infinite Lord of the universe, is the *Sahaj Yoga*, O Bharthari, which I advise all seekers of God to follow."

"My friend, let thy mind drink the nectar of His Name and, thus intoxicated, remain ever equipoised and full of joy. Keep thy soul lovingly attached to the Lord. In this way you will ever hear an eternal, harmonious melody in the heart of thy heart. Instead of wine distilled from a fermented mixture of brown sugar, bark of the *Kikar* tree, and some flowers, make a heavenly drink out of Divine Knowledge, noble acts, a constant hunger for the Lord felt in the soul, and an all-embracing and steadfast love. A cup full of such divine drink is not to be had by self-tortures and austerities, but by resigning one's will to the Will of God and remaining ever in an attitude of faith and hope. The Lord gives it to him on whom He showers His Grace. How can one whose heart is set on a full draught of this Nectar ever give himself up to harmful intoxicants like wine? One who hearkens to the Guru's instructions and drinks this cup of the

Word of God is at once accepted by Him. How can one whose whole being is hungry for a sight of the Bewitching Lord and for a seat at His door ever hanker after Salvation or Paradise ? They have no value or attraction for him. He has no concern with them. They are below his thoughts. One who is ever engrossed in singing the Lord's praises and in a calm contemplation of Divine Virtues, is ever self-intoxicated and needs not the false short-lived intoxication to be had from alcoholic or such other drinks. He is ever attuned to the Lord and thus lives in an unshakable attitude of detachment from the world. He does not gamble away his life in hankering after harmful intoxicants. Listen, O Bharthari-Yogi, to the Word of God as sung by Nanak. Such a man drinks the Nectar of Name and lives in a divine intoxication every moment of his life. Such a one should thou try to be."*

The Sidhs Enter the Path.

Bharthari was convinced that the *Sahaj Yoga* advocated by the Guru was superior to the *Hath Yoga* followed by the Yogis. He resolved to qualify himself for entering the Path laid down by the Guru. We shall see later that he was successful at last. But his disciples and associates would not yield so easily. They felt annoyed at finding all the offerings meant for them, and all their devoted worshippers, being diverted to the Guru. So they came in a group to have discussions with him. But they were vanquished. They too acknowledged him their master.

Many were the persons who entered the Path at that place. A Gurdwara was erected at the spot to commemorate the Guru's visit and to keep up the flow of the Name and Word of God in that locality.†

* *Rag Asa.*

† In the note of Bhai Paira's observations and experiences made by Bhai Banno under the heading " Haqiqat Rai Muqam," it is mentioned that Bhai Paira found a Sikh Sangat or a centre of Sikhism at *Kajli Ban* in the Deccan. It is also stated that at that place the Guru had a discussion with the Sidhs of the place, vanquished them completely, and established a centre of his faith there.

On the Way Back.

Leaving *Kajli Ban* the Guru started northwards along the west coast of the Deccan. He visited Nasik, Bombay, Surat, Kathiawar, Junagarh, Dwarka, Somnath, and numerous other places on the way. Everywhere he met noted Pandits, Pirs, Ascetics, and Yogis and brought them on the right path. As these people had ample following in their respective localities, their conversion to the new faith meant the conversion of large numbers. Thereafter, he travelled through Sind and Bahawalpur, and crossing the Sutlej, visited Shujaabad. Thence he visited the city called Uch where he had a religious discussion with Pir Ahmad Hussan Jalal Din. The Pir acknowledged the Guru as his spiritual guide. All his followers of course did the same. In due course the Guru returned to his birth-place in about 1515 A. D. After a short stay there he visited his sister at Sultanpur. Thence he returned to Kartarpur where he had left his family. He had been on tour for over four years.

CHAPTER XXIX

TOUR TO THE NORTH

Brahmdas and Kamal

After a short stay at Kartarpur the Guru again started on his mission of reforming the world. This was in about 1516 A.D. This time he directed his steps to the north. He wore leather on his head and fleet, and had a sheep-skin coat or toga on his body. On his forehead he had a saffron *tilak*. With him he had two companions—Hassu, a blacksmith, and Sihan, a calico-printer. Mardana was left behind to sing the Word of God to the disciples at Kartarpur. As usual, he took a circuitious route, visiting all important places where people needed his message of work, service, love, prayer, and adoration. On the one hand he met learned Brahmins, Ascetics, Yogis, Pirs, and Faqirs, who, by virtue of their real or feigned learning and supernatural powers, lived lives of slothful ease and sometimes even of vicious luxury. In his own sweet way he convinced them of the sinfulness of their parasitic lives, and taught them the right way to attain piety and honour. On the other hand, he met men in secular authority, chiefs and kings, who, forgetful of their duties towards God and man and their own higher selves, were entangled in superstition and sensual pleasures, and misused their powers in oppressing and tyrannizing over their subjects. Fearlessly, but sweetly, he convinced them of the wrong that they were committing against the people as well against their own inner selves. He awoke in them the spirtual faculty which all have but few use and develop. By the conversion of these persons holding secular or religious

authority all their followers automatically took to the right path in the course of time.

At Martand.

Accompanied by his two disciples the Guru travelled northwards. In due course he reached Kashmir via Jammu. After visiting Anantnag and the adjoining places, he reached the Twin Springs of Martand near Mattan. A lover of Nature that he was, he was greatly drawn by the beauty of the place. He took his post at Mattan on a platform in the lower lake of the Springs. Surrounded on all sides by Nature in her exquisite beauty of colour, form, and hue, the Guru let his spirit roam from Nature to her Lord and Maker. It was in such free, un-interrupted communions that he drank at the Supreme Source of all Life, Light, Love, and Bliss, and, after having had his fill, distributed these divine blessings among the people too busy in their mundane affairs. He stayed at the Springs for about three weeks. Shepherds who grazed their herds in the neighbourhood heard his Divine Songs that went far and long over the wings of the still, mountain air, and came to pay their homage to one who seemed to be living on air and the Word of God. They got the Word from him and went about singing it in joyful notes as they tended their herds in the rich valleys of Kashmir.

Pandit Brahmdas.

After some time, his presence became known to a learned Brahmin, named Brahmdas. This Brahmin was the most eminent of the Pandits of Kashmir. Two camels loaded with books of ancient wisdom were always at his heels. He had studied all these and could lead discussion on every one of them. Round his neck he always carried his stone god suspended by a thread. Very impressive did he look when marching with all this array and display of piety and learning. He heard that a strange man, who wore leather

and ate fish', had come and was living near the Spring. He also heard that a shepherd, who had approached that man with the intention of cutting some practical jokes with him, had, at the very sight of him, abandoned all his frivolity and fallen at his feet. The shepherd was said to have been transfigured by the Word of the strange man. After that meeting, he had always gone about singing strange charming, soul-stirring songs. Many others had been likewise transfigured by a touch of the feet of him whom, ever after, they called him their Guru or Master. Brahmdas heard all this. Something in him was touched. He wanted to see the Guru but his pride of learning stood in his way. He did not feel inclined to go and humble himself before a stranger.

Kamal Blessed with Light.

He was thus undecided, when he met his Muhammadan friend, Kamal. This latter was a seeker after God. He had searched for Him in the seclusion of forests and hills, away from haunts of men, but his search had been in vain. He had not been blessed with the Grace of God. His heart was, therefore, hungry as ever. His thirst for the living waters flowing from the feet of the Supreme Lord was unslaked. He pined for a true life of the spirit. The learning of his friend Brahmdas had also failed to slake the thirst of his soul.

On that day, as Kamal went to see his friend, the latter told him of the strange man near the Spring and of all that was being said about him. Kamal, whose parched soul had been athirst for the Lord since long, at once sought the presence of Guru Nanak, for something within him had whispered to him that the Guru would be able to give him the living water, the *Amrit*, for which he had searched so long in vain. A look on that divinely radiant face did for Kamal what years of wandering in forests, self-tortures, and

smadhis had failed to do. He bowed at his feet. A thrill of joy passed through him. His sleeping spirit awoke within him into full life. He felt the lighting of a holy flame in his soul. He realized that the Lord, for whom he had been vainly searching in the forests, was in his own heart. The Guru showed him that in the depths of his own heart burnt and glowed the divine spark which he had so long managed to hide and smother. The Divine Guest had been at home when he, the seeker and host, had been abroad, too busy in his vain pursuits to attend to the Great King who sat ever ready for him in the innermost shrine of his own soul. By the grace of the Guru he discerned God shining as a 'triple constellation in the spiritual firmament, as the source of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful'. He found the Lord of his quest pervading the world and enthroned in his own breast. All this gave him a joy which he had never known before even in dream. He became a disciple of the Guru. He followed Guru Nanak in his journey till he was asked to settle in the Kurram valley and preach his Master's message among the tribes all round.

Brahmdas Meets the Guru.

When Brahmdas heard of the transfiguration of his friend Kamal, he also went to the Guru. But the pride of learning also went with him. It still sat at the door steps of his heart, bidding away all thoughts of humility which comes from the opening of the soul's eyes. His camel loads of wisdom were yet with him. He wished to discuss his learning with the Guru. On reaching near the Guru, he saluted him and sat before him. He then questioned the Guru about his wearing leather and eating fish. The Guru smilingly told him that piety did not consist in wearing this or that form of dress or eating this or that kind of food. "True piety should dwell in the heart and soul of man. It should mould his character and colour his dealings with his

fellow-beings. Only such dress and such articles of food should be avoided as produce pain and disease in the body and engender evil thoughts and foul desires in the mind and heart. The observance of needless formalities in dress and food only serves to dwarf and cripple the soul and to crush the divine spark which burns and glows in the depths of every human heart." All the knowledge, added the Guru, which the Pandit had acquired had only distracted him all the more. He was as ignorant as ever of the Fount of true Knowledge. He had acquired knowledge for its own sake and had thus succeeded in burdening his soul unnecessarily. True Knowledge which could help man in his journey towards God-realization should have its roots in Faith and its topmost branches in Love. He had, however, been hanging in the mid, dry air of soul-less knowledge. Faith and Love were absent from his barren, lore-laden heart. How could there have developed a friendship, a living bond, between the seeker and the Sought, the knower and the Unknown ?

Brahmdas was almost convinced of his error. Still his philosophical mind urged him to put a question or two. So he asked, "How were the things created ? What existed before creation ? Where was God then ?"

His Conversion.

The Guru replied to him in a Song. It told him that such enquiries were of no use as they could lead nowhere. The world is in God and God is in the world. The Creator alone can know His own secrets. Man can only hazard guesses. But they are futile. It is enough for a man to know that the whole universe is the creation of a Supreme Being who dwells in its every little part and particle and is yet aloof from all. But not every man can see or feel Him in-dwelling in His own creation. We cannot see God, until the image of God in which we were made, has been converted by a life of service and devotion into a likeness of God stamped

on our souls. In order to see Him as He is, we must be like Him. To that end we must pray and act, that is, love and serve our fellowbeings on the one side, and love and adore our Maker on the other. This Brahmdas had never done. How could he know and see God and fathom His ways?"

Brahmdas fell at the Guru's feet and begged for light. His wish was granted. He became a disciple of the Guru. He burnt his books of learning and threw away the stone god from his neck. When the Guru left that place, he entrusted Brahmdas with the duty of bringing others to the Path which the Guru had shown to him. Right earnestly did Brahmdas do this duty of sharing with others the Love, Light, Life, and Joy which the Guru had infused in him and of lighting in the souls of others the holy flame which Guru Nanak had lighted in his.

CHAPTER XXX

TOUR TO THE NORTH—II

The Mansarowar Lake

The Sidhs of Mansarowar.

Leaving Brahmdas, the Guru made a tour of Kashmir, staying about two weeks at Sirinagar. Thence, passing again through Mattan, he penetrated further north. Scaling several lofty mountains, he reached Mount Sumer or Kailash and the Mansarowar Lake. There he met several renowned Sidhs. One of them, Bharthari, had already met him in the jungles of the Deccan, and had acknowledged his greatness. The arrival of the Guru made a stir among the Sidhs. They lived in those cool regions lives of sloth and luxury, drinking wine and eating all that they could get or exact from the people there. The people had to meet their exactions because the Sidhs used to terrify them with the show of their occult powers. The Sidhs regarded the Guru as a possible disturber of their pleasant life.

Another thought also puzzled them. The Mansarowar Lake was inaccessible to ordinary men. The Sidhs could go there because they had, by various practices of *Yoga*, acquired uncommon powers of endurance. They also possessed powers which, in their opinion, could be acquired only by a practice of *Yoga*. The Guru and his disciples' bodies, glowing with health and vigour, seemed to be unaccustomed to severe penances. How had the three managed to pass such difficult heights and overcome all the obstacles of the journey to the Mansarowar ?

So the first question which they put to the Guru was, "What power has brought you here over such difficult heights?"* The Guru replied, "In love and meekness I worshipped the Omnipotent Lord, Who is the Source of all Power. His Grace has enabled me to climb so far."

Their Discussion with the Guru.

"What is your name and what your creed?"

"Nanak is my name," replied the Guru. "I have obtained the object of my desire by meditating on the Divine Lord. By regarding myself as a humble servant and seeker of God, I have raised myself to His feet. My creed is that of love for God and his creation."

"How fares it with the world below?" enquired the Sidhs.

How Goes the World?

The question gave the Guru an opportunity to give to the Sidhs a piece of his mind regarding their mode of life and their neglect of duty towards mankind. So he replied, "Well friends, hard, very hard indeed, does it go with the world below. Sin and falsehood, tyranny and oppression, lust and greed, wars and pestilence, prevail everywhere and disfigure the land. The world is engulfed in darkness, deep and thick. It is as impossible to discover Truth and Righteousness there in these days as it is to see the bright moon on a moonless night. India has lost this moon of Truth and Righteousness. I have girded up my loins in search of this lost treasure. But vain, yes utterly vain, appears to be my search. You ask, 'What is the state of things in the world?' Have you a thought to spare for your unfortunate motherland? I tell you that she is in the grip of sin, evil, and darkest woes, and is crying aloud in

* The discussion which the Guru had with the Sidhs is given by Bhai Gurdas in his *Vars*. The account given above is a rather free rendering of the twenty-eighth to thirty-first stanzas of the first Var

agony. But in this doleful song that rises from the breast of an afflicted humanity you discover a music which lulls you to slumber. There is none in the land who could remedy this sorry state of things. How could it be otherwise? Those who could have done so have fled from their duties. Persons like you, who are the cream of the Hindu society, have concealed themselves in the fastness of the mountains. You have deserted the poor people to their miserable lot, you who ought to have been their leaders in this age of sin, slavery, and darkness. Propt on your beds of ferns and flowers beside this lake of nectar in the mountains, you take the inebriating cup and live and lie reclined together like gods, careless of mankind. Yet you would enquire from me, 'how fares it with the world?' To speak the truth, you add to the misery of the afflicted people on whom you live as parasites. I wonder what good you see in this life of sloth and drunkenness. You neglect your duty towards man, God, and your own higher selves. True religion should teach you to work, pray, and adore; it should teach you to be true sons of your motherland. Devoid of true worship, which consists in honouring and loving the Father, negligent of your duty to your neighbours which consists in lovingly helping them onwards in the path of progress towards the Blissful Home of the Father, and unmindful of your duty to your own selves which consists in a healthy, all-round, development and right use of the body, mind, and spirit, you sit here lost in a vain, drunken contemplation. You have ceased to be men of religion; for religion does not consist in trying to save one's own self by virtue of creed and seclusion, but in trying to save others by virtue of life lived in the world. Why should you enquire about the world? You are as good as dead so far as the poor, suffering, sin-ridden, down-trodden humanity is concerned."

"But," said the Sidhs, "not all of our great Order have thus retired from the world. Several of our people go about from house to house. Surely, they must be doing their duty and ministering to the mental and spiritual needs of the people."

"No friend," replied the Guru. "Your Yogis have fallen likewise. They lack both virtue and knowledge. With them *Yoga* consists in rubbing ashes on their bodies, morning and evening, and begging for food from door to door. There is none among them competent to show the right path to the deluded, degraded, and trodden people. Men of religion, who in the past used to guide and reform the populace, have themselves taken to evil ways. They have reduced religion to a mockery. They go about begging and exacting food, filling their bellies, and gathering provisions for their large families. The condition of the people is wretched indeed. All distinctions of right and wrong, and of good and evil, have disappeared from among them. They have become brutalized and behave like wild beasts, snatching others' rights and substance without the least compunction. Social ties have all become loose. Conjugal relations are now an affair of lust and lucre. Sanctity of marriage is no longer respected. Men and women meet and part at will. Sin prevails all round in the land. Kings, whose duty it is to make and enforce good laws, to keep peace in the land, and to safeguard their subjects' life, honour, and property, have themselves become the greatest criminals. The fence, so to say, is eating up the crop; the shepherds are destroying the sheep. The rulers are oppressing and misusing the people in countless ways. The Qazis and other officials are corrupt. They take bribes and deprive people of their rights. Trodden under this manifold tyranny and slavery, devoid of true education and training, and bereft of leaders and teachers like you who could have enlightened and organized them, the people have become

debased and demoralized. They have lost their souls. They have become weak in body, mind, and spirit. They have no faith in themselves. Under manifold oppression they have ceased to have any regard for truth. No organization to withstand the evil of tyranny, oppression, and misrule is possible under such conditions. How is the world to be saved? Who is to save it ?"

The Divine Discourse.

The Sidhs were greatly impressed with what the Guru said. They felt the justice of his rebuke, but they had not the strength of heart to give up their life of intoxication and passive contemplation and return to the turmoil of the world. "How good would it be," thought they, "if this great man, who knows the world so well and feels for it so deeply, were to be converted to our Order. He could then go into the world and put fresh life into our declining Sect." So, they tried to allure him with a show of riches. They requested him to fetch a jug of water from the lake. The Guru found that the whole bank of the lake was covered with various kinds of precious stones. But he paid no heed to them. Finding him impregnable that way, they tried to defeat him in religious discussion. They failed there, too. The Divine Songs which the Guru sang in reply to their questions are given in the Guru Granth Sahib. In these he told them of the path that he had come to show to the people. The gist of one of them is given in brief here below :—

"In, behind, and beyond this visible world there dwells the Supreme Power which sustains the whole show by means of eternal laws. Religion awakens in the soul of man a thirst for an attunement and union with this Supreme Power, and prescribes the ways and means for the satisfaction of this hunger and thirst of the human soul. To achieve a union with Him, a man should associate with men of God and

there sing of His lofty, divine qualities. By his so doing there arises in his heart a love and respect for those qualities. In consequence, he tries to acquire them. He sheds all evil that pollute his heart and mind. He becomes like him whose praises he rejoices to sing. He goes about his daily duties with God enthroned in his heart. He speaks only as much as is absolutely necessary for the discharge of his duties. Otherwise he keeps busy in singing of God and his attributes, and in making efforts to realize those virtues in his daily life. In this way he is ennobled daily and hourly. Thus, by remaining in the world and yet resolutely refusing to concede a jot to it, he acquires internal isolation and strength of will which cannot be acquired by any other means. The Name of the Lord and His divine attributes become indelibly engraved on his subconscious self. It becomes a habit with him to be ever in tune with the Infinite. He then no longer remains the true author of his acts. His thoughts, feelings, and efforts are all in perfect harmony with the Divine Will. He does as the Lord bids him, for he has become one with him. When he reaches such a state, he becomes like Him in every respect. He acquires the power to move mountains. God fulfils his slightest wish. But such a servant of the Lord ceases to have any wish or will that is not his Lord's wish and will. He turns not his thoughts after occult powers, as he has no desire to pose as a great man in the eyes of the world. He succeeds in eliminating all thoughts of his own self from the sphere of his activity. To ensure this further, he engages himself in the service of others. This breeds humility. The internal joy born of this selfless, disinterested service of others elevates his soul and spurs him to greater efforts that way. Thus he lives in Him and He lives in him. His life is a pilgrimage, leading him, through Love, Service, and Devotion, to the Throne of the Creator and Sustainer of the world. When he dies, he does so cheerfully, for he goes to

Him, eager to carry out His behests whenever and wherever He might choose to send him forth again." (*Rag-Asa.*)

The Sidhs Admit Defeat.

All that the Guru said silenced the Sidhs. Their pride was humbled. They acknowledged the truth of his words but were not willing to put those words into practice. They would not give up their lives of inebriate sloth and musings. Only one of them, Bharthari Yogi, who had once already met the Guru in the jungles of the Deccan, became a disciple of the Guru. We shall see that, after a time, this yogi left the company of the Sidhs and settled at Kartarpur.

This defeat of the Sidhs at the Guru's hands, followed by another at Achal Batala,* completely broke the spell of their power over the people of the locality. In token of their gratitude for this relief from the exactions of the Sidhs, the people of that mountainous tract began to respect and adore the Guru. He is held still in great esteem there as is testified by persons who have recently visited those parts. In the four cave temples that stand round the Mansarowar Lake images of Guru Nanak are also worshipped by those people along with other images. These temples are objects of pilgrimage for monks from Tibbet and Sadhus from India.

To China.

From Mansarowar the Guru turned backwards and passing through Nepal, Sikkam, Bhutan, and Tibbet, he entered China. He went as far at least as Nanking and established a dharamsala there. Since then several Chinese have been worshipping him. Several Chinese pilgrims are even now seen at Amritsar worshipping at the "Wahiguru's Temple", as they call the Golden Temple.

From China the Guru re-entered Tibbet and went as far as Lhassa. From there he returned to Kashmir over the mountains and entered the plains via Jammu.

* See Chapter XXXII

CHAPTER XXXI

BABAR'S INVASION

The reader will remember that several years before, in 1501 A. D., when Babar was as yet suffering terrible reverses in his native land, and was uncertain of retaining or winning back his ancestral territory, the Guru had foretold the advent of that Mughal into India. Guru Nanak had said then that there would be terrible bloodshed. rape, rapine, and devastation in the land. Syedpur or Eminabad, where the prophecy was uttered, was to feel the invader's wrath in Sambat 1578 or 1521 A. D.

The Guru's Great Compassion.

While returning from his northern tour, the Guru saw in his clairvoyant vision that the ravenous, success-intoxicated hordes of Babar, which that invader self-complacently called 'the armies of Islam bent on Holy War'* were coming sweeping down on India. The Guru knew what was coming. He saw the dire doom that was about to fall as a thunderbolt on the inhabitants of Syedpur where dwelt his dear disciple, Lalo. His compassionate heart went out to the would-be sufferers. The patriot in him was stirred to the depths. But what could he do for his country ? He had no army at his back with which he could have saved his countrymen from ravage and ruin, and force the invader to desist from wanton bloodshed, rape, and rapine. All the same, this love for mankind would not let him stay away from the scene of woe and suffering. Perhaps he might be able to effect a change for the better in the heart

* *Memoirs of Babur.*

of the invader. In any case, he would be in the midst of his unfortunate, suffering brethren. He could not avert the catastrophe that came thundering on their devoted heads, but he would share their woes and misery and try to lighten the burden of their grief. Being what he was—a lover of mankind—,he could not have acted otherwise ; "for love as we know it in this world is almost inseparable from suffering. Not only are we prepared to suffer for those whom we love but also the fellowship which love establishes makes us share such sufferings as may have to be borne by those whom we love."

The Sack of Syedpur.

So from Jammu he went to Sialkot and thence, after a short time, reached Syedpur. Armies of Babar had not been heard of there as yet. But they came soon. It was Babar's third invasion. He crossed the border in 926 A.H. or 1520-21 A.D. At first he reduced Bhira and then marched on Sialkot. Everywhere the people found themselves between the devil and the deep sea. If they submitted to Babar and supplied him with provisions, they exposed themselves to the wrath of the emperor of Delhi, who would surely take them to task after Babar returned to his native land in the manner of Taimur. If they did not submit to Babar, he would kill them, plunder and burn their homes, and take away their women and children as slaves. "The people of Sialkot submitted and saved their possessions." But they saved little else from Babar's lascivious army. In 1521 A.D. (1578 of the Bikrimi era) Babar reached Syedpur. The Pathan rulers of the place decided to resist the invader. The Pir and Mullas promised to help them with their spells and incantations. A life of ease, tyranny, and ignoble pleasures had sapped the strength of the Pathans. Moreover, their arrows and spears and unwieldly elephants could be of little

use against the guns and matchlocks of the invader. They had to yield. All of them were put to the sword.*

They started the plunder and massacre of the city. All men that were found there were murdered in cold blood. Women, whether of high or low families and castes, whether Hindu or Muhammadan, were dragged by the hair in the dusty streets, beaten, outraged, and forced amid tortures to disclose their hidden jewellery and valuable property. The soldiers, intoxicated with victory and wine, spared neither child, woman, nor old man. Women and children were led into captivity. All men who escaped the sword were made prisoners and forced to carry their plundered property to the camp of the victorious army. Such was the "Holy War" of Babar for success in which he failed not to invoke the aid of God. The neighbouring villages were also treated in the same manner. Sword, fire, rape, and rapine spread desolation all round.

The Guru Taken Prisoner.

Hearing of the Guru's arrival and stay at Syedpur, Bhai Mardana had hastened to join him. Thus when Babar's armies fell upon that city, Mardana was with the Guru. Both of them were taken prisoners. Guru Nanak was given a load to carry and Mardana was required to act as a groom for the horse of one of the commanders named Mir Khan.

* *Cf. Memoirs of Babar*, vol. II, page 149, Erskine's historical supplement where it is written :—" He advanced to Sialkot, the inhabitants of which submitted and saved their possessions ; but the inhabitants of Syedpur, who resisted, were put to the sword, their wives and children carried into captivity, and all their property plundered."

It has to be noted with regret that among the gaps that occur in the Memoirs of Babur as recorded by himself one is about the period from 926 to 932 A H. or 1520 to 1526 A.D These gaps have been filled up by the translator with his historical supplements based on other books about the period. If Babar had left a record of the events of this period, he would surely have mentioned his meeting with the Guru. The part played by the Guru in reforming the Emperor would have then acquired an unassailable recognition.

The weight on his head the Guru did not feel. It did not seem to touch him at all; for there was a far heavier weight pressing on his patriotic, compassionate heart. With eyes full of tears, he saw the miserable plight of his countrymen and countrywomen. His heart felt as if pressed by an unbearable burden. He saw how ladies, who had thought it a sin and disgrace to let an outsider have even a glance at their face, were then, after day-light dishonour and outrage, being forced to march uncovered in the company of their ravishers and torturers. All this filled him with deep sorrow. He asked Mardana to play the rebeck, for the Word of God had come. " Let go the horse, " said he. "It will follow us all right." Mardana did as bidden. Music on the rebeck began. People were amazed at what they considered the uncommon callousness of a faqir who could find it in his heart to play the rebeck in such a woeful company. The Guru then lifted his voice and poured out his heart in a song which may be translated as follows :—

" The beautiful women, who used to dwell in palaces, whose locks were dressed with perfumed wax, and whose foreheads were painted with the sacred vermilion mark,
Have had their tresses clipped with the swords of Babar and dust has been thrown on their shaven heads and dishonoured necks.
They used to live in the privacy of their palatial chambers,
But now, Oh change of time, they find no place of rest in public even.
How strange is Thy dispensation, O Lord,
How incomprehensible are Thy ways !
When newly married, how charming fair looked these unlucky women beside their spouses in the bridal chambers.
They came seated in palanquins, the lucky ivory bangles shook musically on their arms ;
The old women of the families waved pitchers of water round the heads of the new brides and then drank it off in token of having taken all ills off the heads of the newly wedded brides. Such was the welcome which they got.
Their silver laden feet made music as they walked.

Thousands and thousands waited on them as they rested or went about

They ate cocoanuts, dried grapes, and dates, and sported with their spouses on cosy beds of down

But to-day they are being led as captives their necklaces of pearls have been broken off, and halters have been put round their bewitching necks

Their wealth and beauty, which gave them power and pleasure then have now become their baneful foes

For orders went round to the soldiers to take and dishonour them and to lead them forth in utter disgrace

And this the soldiers did most callously

It is Thy Will, O Lord ! Honour and dishonour are both Thy gifts

Thou bestowest one or the other as Thou willest

O people if ye had thought of Him in time and taken heed, this retribution would not have fallen on your heads

O ye kings, if ye hadn t lost all sense amid ignoble joys and pleasures, this misery wouldn t have been the lot of this land.

Now the cohorts of Babar are rolling over the country

None can have his meals in peace

How hard it is with the captives

Their times of worship and prayer pass away unused

These Indian ladies have now no place to sit and cook or bathe and anoint themselves with the frontal marks

They had never thought of God before and now they find no time or leisure to remember Him

All is death and confusion now

Some return to their ruined homes and make anxious enquiries about their lost ones

Such is their lot ordained by Him—to sit and weep and wail and moan

All happens as it pleases Him, O Nanak

What is man to will against His Will ?' (*Asa Astpadi*)

The Effect of the Song.

The heavenly, doleful music and the divine, soul-inspiring hymn were heard far and near by the miserable crowd. Everyone forgot his distress. All turned their thoughts on God. Mir Khan happened to come that way. He

saw his horse following Mardana while the latter was playing sweet, sacred music on his rebeck. He saw how Guru Nanak, with a strange glory lighting his countenance, and quite oblivious of the heavy load on his head, was pouring forth his heart in a song which, like a shower of blessing rain in summer's burning heat, soothed and cooled the woe-laden hearts of the captives. Mir Khan did not understand what the Guru sang ; but he could not but feel the effect of music and observe how spell-bound were all who heard and understood it. He shook his head in wonder at a man who could sing under such circumstances and went his way.

The camp was reached at last. The captives were set to grind corn for the victorious army. Guru Nanak and Mardana, too, got each a hand-mill and a measure of corn to grind. On looking round, the Guru saw how men and women who, ere then, had rolled in wealth and luxury, were performing menial labour in order to save their skin. The sight again touched his heart. He heaved a sigh as a father would do on seeing his sons and daughters in woe. But the very next moment his spirit climbed up to the bosom of the dispenser of all joy and sorrow. Sitting in His loving arms, he forgot his captivity and labour. He sat with eyes closed, a veritable picture of peace, equanimity, and joy. Mardana sat by his side playing sweet music on the rebeck.

Babar Meets the Guru.

Mir Khan, who had on the way heard the Guru's Song and noticed its deep, soothing effect on the captives, talked of it to Babar. The Emperor said that if he had known that the city contained such men of God, he would have spared it. Thereafter, Mir Khan and Babar went to the captive's camp. They saw the Guru sitting in a trance and Mardana playing the rebeck by his side. Babar and his companion stood gazing and wondering at the strange captive.

After a time the Guru opened his eyes and sang a song about the Greatness of God and the littleness of man, about the infinite, all-embracing love and pity of the Lord and the thoughtless vanity and hardness of the human heart. The song roused the sleeping conscience of Babar. He said to his companion, "I see God in the face of this holy man." The would-be Emperor of India then approached the Guru and expressed his regrets for the lack of respect shown to him, and asked if he could do anything for him. He pressed the Guru to accept an offering from him.

"For myself, "replied the Guru, "I need nothing from you. But if you have really a mind to make an offering to a servant of God, then set at liberty all these captives and restore to them their plundered property."

The Emperor issued orders at once. All were released and their property restored to them as far as that as possible. Military posts that had been stationed round the city were also withdrawn. The captives who had regained their liberty and property refused to move unless their liberator went with them. Babar agreed to that but begged the Guru to favour him with a visit during his encampment in the neighbourhood. "As wills the Lord," said the Guru and departed with the released prisoners behind him.

The Song of Lamentation.

On reaching Syedpur, he saw the grim spectacle of countless corpses lying scattered in the city and the streets and lanes all covered with human blood* The sight touched his heart. He bade Mardana play the rebeck, for the Word of God had come. The song of lamentation which he sang can be translated as under :—

"Where are those merry sports and the means thereof ?

* In his hymn of prophecy and lament, sung several years before the sack of Syedpur, the Guru had called it "the city of corpses", (*vide* page 142 of this book). The sight that was now before him must have been present before his mind's eye when he applied that graphic epithet to the unfortunate city.

Where are the stables and the prancing steeds ?
Where the trumpets, horns, and bugles ?
Where are they who, with their swords buckled on, looked so mighty in battle array ?
Where are their bright, scarlet uniforms ?
Where are the mirrors and the fair faces seen therein ?
Alas, gone are they all !
No trace of them is left in this place
This world is Thine, O Lord, of the earth,
In a moment dost Thou make and unmake it as Thou willest,
And dost distribute and re distribute the world's possessions at Thy pleasure free
Where are the houses mansions, and palaces grand ?
Where the magnificent seraglios fair ?
Where are the cosy beds with charming damsels reclining thereon
The sight of whom did banish sleep and the desire to sleep ?
Where are the betels, their sellers and the rosy lipped beauties that charmed ?
Vanished unto dust are they all
This mammon hath ruined and disgraced a lot of mankind
It can t be amassed without evil and sinful means
And it goeth not with man after his death
Here doth it remain, though his sins and evil give him company in the life to come
Him whom the Creator would destroy and bring to grief He first depriveth of virtue
When they heard the Emperor coming countless Pirs by magic and incantations offered to thwart his plans and check his progress
Babar came, all the same, and burnt houses, mansions, palaces, and all ,
He cut princes into pieces and had them rolled in dust.
The Pirs worked no miracles though they said they would ,
No Mughal was rendered blind.
The Mughals and Pathans have measured swords on the field of battle ,
Fierce and bloody has the contest been
One side aimed and fired their guns and matchlocks the other rushed out with elephants in the van
They, whose hour had come, had to die, my friend.
The wives of Hindus, of Turks, of Bhattis, and of Rajputs brave
Have had their raiments torn from head to foot,

They go now wandering madly about amongst their dead.
How did they, how could they, whose spouses returned not home pass their night ?
The Creator alone doth act and make others act as He doth will.
To whom should man complain ?
Pain and pleasure, trouble and joy, are all Thy dispensations O Lord !
To whom should we go with appealing cries ?
The Lord ordaineth as it pleaseth Him ,
All happens as He doth will ;
Man must get, O Nanak, as He doth allot ,
His Will doth ever prevail." (*Asa Astpadi*)

The news was soon abroad that, through the intercession of Guru Nanak, Babar had released the captives of Syedpur, restored their property, and recalled the military posts that had been stationed round the city. Those who had fled on the arrival of the invaders now returned to their homes. The survivors hailed each other and mourned for their dead. The bodies of the dead were disposed of and the houses began to be set in order.

To Babar's Camp Again.

The Guru then learnt that there were yet others of his fellows in Babar's captivity. Many people of the surrounding villages had not been released. Others had been taken on suspicion. Babar's cohorts had kept with them several beautiful women of Syedpur and the neighbouring villages ; for that was one of the ways in which his 'soldiers of Islam' were rewarded for their exertion in that 'Holy War'. How could Guru Nanak's heart find rest while there yet remained some of his sisters and brothers whom he could deliver from servitude, misery, and dishonour worse than death ? So he started towards the camp again, but all alone this time.

It was early in the morning yet. Amid chirping of birds in trees, bushes, and the sky, the Guru went on, thinking of

the inhuman slaughter of weak, innocent, unarmed people. Reaching near the camp of Babar, the Guru raised his voice into a song in which he poured forth the agony of his bleeding, fatherly heart in an invocation to the Creator of both the slayers and the slain. In the deep agony of his heart he even arraigned the Lord for taking sides. Thus sang he :—

"To-day Khurasan seems to be Thine own, O Lord, but why not India ?
Why hast Thou made that Thine and terrified this by the terrible threat of this mighty retribution ?
Thou takest no blame unto Thyself, O Creator of all !
It is thus that Thou hast sent the Yama disguised as Mughal.
Terrible hath been the suffering inflicted on Thy poor, helpless people, O Lord of Pity !
So terrible that they all cried aloud in deepest agony
Didst Thou feel no pang or pity at all that came to pass ?
Thou belongest equally to all, O Creator, Thou must equally feel for all.
If a strong man attacketh another who is equally strong, one need feel no grief or anger ;
But when lions and fiery wolves are let loose, as now, on herds of sheep and cattle,
It is the Master thereof who has to be held accountable for this wanton destruction.
The hounds of war have wasted many a precious jewel of life .
How proud they are of all their deeds ! In the pride of their present power
Little do they heed what they'll have to bear in the life to come.
How mysterious are Thy ways, O Lord !
Thou dost bring people together and then partest them.
When these men of this earth give themselves a great name and call themselves kings and do as it pleaseth them,
They should remember that Thou seest them all, My Lord !
Yes, Thou seest even the tiny creatures that crawl and the worms that nibble the corn.
He alone can merit win who accepts a dying life, who has inhibited his lower self, and in the spirit doth hourly live,
And who, each moment of his life, doth love and serve and remember God."

(*Rag Asa.*)

Second Meeting with Babar.

Babar heard the Song. He could not understand what it meant; but the plaintive notes of music that came to him on the wings of the still, morning air went deep into his heart. He sent for the Minstrel of God. Yes, it was he, the liberator of the Syedpur captives. Seating him respectfully by his side, he asked him the meaning of his Song. The Guru explained to him the purport of what he had been singing, laying special stress on the lines which lamented the butchery of unarmed people at the hands of Babar's soldiery. Babar felt the justice of the Guru's rebuke. Full of remorse, he tried to win the pleasure of this man of God who could not only feel so strongly for his people in woe, but who could also speak so fearlessly to a dreaded invader and conqueror. He behaved most respectfully towards the Guru and begged him to stay with him and sing to him his sweet, inspiring Songs of God. The Guru agreed to stay for three days. Many a soul-stirring Song did he sing to Babar and his nobles; many an illuminating discourse on the duties of kings and rights of man did he deliver to the would-be Emperor of India. But all along, he could not suppress sighs of pity and sympathy when he thought of his fellow-beings in Babar's captivity. On the third day of his stay at Babar's camp he had an opportunity to see some of the unfortunate creatures engaged in hard labour. The sight of his suffering countrymen sent the Guru into a trance. Babar thought that perhaps the "Faqir of Allah" was going to quit the world. The thought made him sorry. But after some time the Guru opened his eyes and regained consciousness. His countenance was brighter than ever. Babar saw this and said, "O Faqir of Allah, grant me thy blessings." The Guru replied, "If thou desirest to obtain the Grace of God then release all who are yet prisoners in thy camp, both men and women." Babar could not refuse,

He issued immediate orders. With tears of joy and gratitude in their eyes the captives were seen leaving the camp. Babar again said to the Guru, " Now, O Holy man of God, do pray for me that my empire in India may last from generation to generation."

The Guru's Advice.

The Guru replied, " If thou desirest to establish an empire in India, be one of the people of India. Make this country thy home. Treat thy Hindu and Mohammadon subjects alike. Let thy rule be a rule of justice and kindness. Deal mercifully with the vanquished and oppress not the non-combatants. Give up wine, gambling, and other ignoble habits of body and mind. Worship God in spirit and in Truth."

" Needless to say that Babar did value and follow all this in his future life, and history bears abundant testimony to this. But for those who have read of Babar's power, influence, and formidableness, the patriotic part played by the Guru does not stand in need of comments. He met the most terrible man on earth, a wink of whose brow was a sufficient order for putting millions to the sword, and by his able intercession, turned him into the kindest ruler. This was the service that the Guru rendered to his country and countrymen."*

***Ramanand to Ram Tirath*, published by Mr. G. A. Natesan of Madras.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE FIFTH TOUR

Settles at Kartarpur.

After his four extensive tours to the east, west, north, and south, extending over above twenty years, the Guru stayed for some eight years at Kartarpur. He put off the ascetic's dress which he had assumed during his travels, and dressed himself in the ordinary raiments of a householder. This was another of his iconoclastic acts. The prevalent usage and ideas were against it. When once a man had renounced his family life and put on an ascetic's dress, he could not resume his former life or dress. If he did so, he exposed himself to general odium. The Guru wanted to demonstrate that truly religious men were free to choose any manner of life and dress which they liked. As long as his inner self was in tune with the Lord, it mattered little what deess a man wore and what occupation he followed. He could not go wrong.

Moreover, all along, the Guru had been advocating a wholesome, harmonious combination of the Cloister and the Hearth. He had been telling to all who came to him for instruction that they should live lives of self-consecration and complete renunciation amid the ties, joys, duties, and functions of the world. Theirs was to be the path of dying life and not of living death. He now demonstrated how this was to be done. He lived among his family, friends, and disciples; busied himself in looking to their comfort and welfare like a conscientious householder. But he also lived in

God, every moment of his life. As he himself says in one of his Divine Songs :—

"So long as I think on Thee and repeat Thy Name I live.
Forgetting Thee I die at once, my Lord." (*Rag Asa.*)

The Divine Sower.

He toiled in the fields as a farmer, he worked in the kitchen, but he also sat on his *gaddi* or his seat as a Guru or Teacher of Mankind, and sang Divine Songs which washed away all sinful thoughts and base proclivities from the hearts of the listeners and filled them with divine virtues. In addition to sowing wheat and other crops in the fields for the physical nourishment of his fellowmen, this old Father of his people also sowed the seed of Name, the sacred Song, in the souls of all who called him their own. Thus he lovingly toiled and sweated for his people so that he might give them the Bread of God to invigorate their bodies and nourish their souls. His wife joyfully co-operated with him in this labour of love for their world-wide family.

Visit to Achal Batala.

Years passed in this way. For the most part the Guru had no intention to undertake long journeys any more. He was already well over fifty. He had been on the move, with but little intervals of rest, for more than twenty years. But it seems that he did not become altogether a home-keeping old man. He made short, local tours whenever he felt the urge within him. If loving hearts yearned for him, he went, for he was drawn by the force of love. On one occasion, however, he travelled much longer and further off from his home. He heard that on the occasion of the annual Shivratri fair held at Achal Batala, in the modern district of Gurdaspur, the Sidhs or Yogis were about to assemble in unusually large numbers. Since the advent of the Guru, their influence had been on the wane. His repeated successful encounters with them had deprived them of the

position they once held in popular estimation. This had naturally annoyed them. So they had determined to make one last effort to regain the ground that they had lost.

We have seen how the Guru had specially visited all the strongholds of the Yogis in India and inflicted on them crushing defeats in religious argument. By vanquishing them the Guru had broken the spell of their power over the people. In this way a great obstacle in the country's path to true piety, peace, and prosperity had been greatly removed. Yet they were bestirring themselves to re-establish their waning influence. So the Guru resolved to scatter their order once for all by meeting and defeating them at Achal Batala Hence, at the age of a little over sixty, he started from Kartarpur on his fifth and last tour. As we shall see, it proved to be longer than he had at first intended it to be. This time his dress was the usual dress of a householder.

The Sidhs had gathered at Achal Batala in unusually large numbers. By a display of supernatural powers they were attracting people and overawing them into submission. How could such a mighty order be ignored or displeased with impunity ? They did not know that the great one, who had proved superior to them at the Mansarowar Lake in the Himalayas, in the Kajli Ban in the Deccan, and in several other places, was coming again to squeeze them dry of all their pulpy pride and power.

The Sidhs Interrogate Him.

The Guru sat a little apart from the crowd. Mardana played the rebeck. After a time the Guru began to sing his Divine Songs. Age had only added to the charms of his sweet, bewitching voice. His personality had become all the more magnetic. All who heard the Song flocked around him. Soon a large crowd sat or stood around him listening to his Songs of the Lord in a deep intoxication

of joy. The Sidhs found themselves deserted and ignored. It was time for them to be up and doing; they went to the place where the Guru was sitting among his people. At first they tried to lower him in the estimation of the audience. "You have given up," said they, "the life and dress of an ascetic. Evidently you have found yourself to be unequal to the effort of body, mind, and soul required for that mode of deeply and truly religious life. The attachments and allurements of the world have proved too much for you. Otherwise, how could you have given up the ascetic's life and dress after having assumed them so long? You have spoiled the little merit that you might have earned And now you come to preach to the people that they should learn from your experience and lead worldly lives. Since you have failed to find God, you are advising others not to seek after Him. A good teacher of men you are, indeed! And very pious and religious are these simpletons who prefer your talks and songs to what we can do for them."

True Renunciation.

The Guru smiled and said, 'My friends, you are mistaken. You boast of having renounced the householders' life. On that account you despise the householders. But, all the same, you feel not the least hesitation in going about begging for food and clothing at the doors of those very people. That is true renunciation, indeed! To live lives of ease and plenty on the earnings of others, and to despise the simple folk who supply your wants and meet your needs! That is religion, indeed! I would have none of it. With me true renunciation consists in renouncing even renunciation itself; in living pure and unpolluted amid the impurities and temptations of the world. True religion with me consists in furthering the progress of humanity towards a union with God. For me worship of God has two sides, a practical side, in our conduct, whereby our whole life becomes an act

of worship; but worship must also have its own life in adoration, prayer, and communion. My religion bids me lead a life of Love, Service, and Devotion amid my countrymen, be ever in tune with the Infinite amid the duties of life, and raise others to that level of ideally religious life. This is what I try to do. This is what I have been teaching mankind throughout my life. This is what is needed most of all by all and particularly by persons like you who live as parasites on the toiling people."

The Sidhs had no reply to make to this. They tried to terrify the Guru and his audience by a fresh and more varied exhibition of their powers. The Guru sat unmoved, singing sweetly of the Lord The crowd of listeners sat rapt and spell-bound, and cared not even to look at the frivolous-minded Sidhs. The latter, who knew only one means of influencing the people, then said to the Guru, "Surely, you must have shown some miracles to these people and to the world at large. How else could you have acquired so much power over them? Why don't you show some to us?"

Miracles ?

The Guru replied, "To speak the truth, my friends, I have thoroughly weighed the Yogis and their Yoga and have found them all to be worth no thought. Believe me that true salvation cannot be had by such means as you are running after. To slake the soul's thirst for God one must hearken to the word of God as sung by a Teacher sent by Him. I speak the truth, my friends. Listen to the word of God as this Minstrel of His will sing. Except the name of the Eternal Lord, I possess no miraculous powers. And I need no more."*

Then he sang:—

*Bhai Gurdas.

"Even if I could attire myself in fire,
Even if I lived for aye amid a home of snow,
If iron and steel were my only food,
If miseries of life were my daily drink,
Had I the power to drive the earth at will,
Were I to balance the earth and heavens against a little weight as a counterpoise,
Were I to enlarge myself so much that the earth should become too small for me,
Had I the power to lash and drive the whole universe,
If such powers of the mind I could have that I could do what I liked and could make all creatures dance to the tune of my will--
For as great are the gifts of the Lord as He Himself is great,
And He bestoweth them when and on whom He willeth--,
All this I would deem as worse than useless.
But, saith Nanak, on the servant whom He favours with a look of His Love and Grace
He bestoweth the power and greatness of His Name,
For such power and greatness are sweeter by far than all supernatural powers."*

When the Guru thus declined to give them battle on their favourite point, they began to interrogate him regarding his faith, philosophy, and religion. They hoped to vanquish him. But once more they realized what many others had done before. The Guru was more than a match for all their combined wit, intellect, and reasoning. The gist of the discussion which the Guru had with the Sidhs was later composed by him into a long poem called the *Sidh Gosht* or the Discussion with the Sidhs. It is embodied in the Guru Granth Sahib. In it the Guru maintained the superiority of a life of piety, love, and service lived in the world over a life of physical inactivity lived away from it.

The Sidhs Enter the Path.

At the conclusion of the discussion, according to the Guru's own testimony as recorded in the *Sidh Gosht*, the Sidhs acknowledged him their Master and begged him most earnestly to bestow on them a little from that limitless treasure

* Guru Nanak, *Majh Var*.

of Name which was his for ever. He fulfilled their wishes and slaked the newly risen thirst of their souls for the Lord. They bowed to him and became his disciples and love-bound slaves for ever. Many of them, including Bharthari whom the Guru had met also in the Deccan, gave up their manner of life and dress and began to live as directed by the Guru. The power of the Sidhs was completely broken. They lost all influence with the people. Their number began to diminish very rapidly. Very grateful were the people for being thus relieved for ever from the manifold exactions of the Sidhs. That seems to have been the last Shivratri fair which the Sidhs celebrated at Achal Batala. On the spot where the Guru sat and had the discussion with the Sidhs stands a Gurdwara in commemoration of his victory over that once famous and mighty order.

To Multan.

From Achal Batala the Guru proceeded to Multan, for there Muslim faqirs in large numbers were oppressing and misleading the people. Having visited the shrines of Bhagat Prehlad and Shams Tabrez, and having preached his message of love, service, and devotion to the people in those places, the Guru went out and sat by the bank of the adjacent river. Multan has ever been known for the unusually large number of faqirs and beggars living there. It was the same story then. Many parasitic persons lived there in the guise of Faqirs and Sadhus. But they were, most of them, spiritually dead as stone. They traded on the people's ignorance and superstitions. They were ever afraid lest some true one should come and, by disillusioning the simple crowds that fed and worshipped them, break the bubble of their hollow, tricky fame. This would mean ruin to the false ones. Guru Nanak had been in the locality for a few days only, but his name had come to be on everybody's lips. If he were to settle there for good, it would mean the undoing of the imposter hermits. They

had also heard how he had vanquished the Sidhs, and several renowned Pirs, Faqirs, and Pandits. All this could not but make them all the more sad and nervous.

The Faqirs' Novel Gift.

So they assembled together to devise means of sending away the true one. This had to be accomplished before long or it would be too late; for he would spoil the whole thing by his Songs and Discourses. But they lacked the courage to go to him straight and give him a piece of their mind. Besides, they felt sure that he would not yield in that way. So they thought of a novel plan of conveying their mind to him. They sent to him a bowl of milk too full to contain a further drop. This was meant to inform the Guru that the city was already too full of hermits. There was no room for him there just as there was no room for another drop of milk in the bowl.

Mardana requested the Guru to accept the milk which he thought had been sent by the faqirs as an offering to the Guru. But the Guru smiled, shook his head, and, placing a little jesamine flower on the surface of the milk in the bowl, bade the bearer thereof take it back to those who had sent him. It told them that just as there was room enough for the jesamine flower in their cup too full of milk to contain another drop, similarly there was room enough for him in Multan and the hearts of the Multanis. Like that little flower he would remain above them all, and without being a burden on any one, he would shed the sweet fragrance which dwelt in his personality alone.

The Faqirs Enter the Path.

A little time after, some of the more noted among the faqirs and sadhus came to have a religious discussion with him. They hoped to defeat him in argument. But they soon discovered what hosts of others like them had discover-

ed several times before; that he was too high for their dwarfed selves. They bowed to him and acknowledged him their Master. He instructed them in the principles of his faith and made them spiritually alive. He taught them how their false renunciation was hampering the progress of their souls. He convinced them that true renunciation consisted in remaining unaffected and pure amid the allurements and impurities of the world. All their followers, thereupon, fell at his feet and joined the Holy Fellowship which he had founded.

The Light of God.

Since then the Sufi Faqirs have acknowledged the spiritual greatness of the Guru and proudly remember him as their teacher and guide. In his own time so great was the reverence which he had been able to inspire in the hearts of several Muslim faqirs that one morning Pir Bahauddin, a Sufi Muslim Faqir who had thousands of Muslim followers, suddenly turned his back on the Káaba and began to bow in his Nimaz in the direction of Kartarpur. When his astonished followers enquired from him the cause of his strange departure from the Muslim practice of bowing towards the Káaba, the Pir replied, "I see the light of God in this direction, my friends. So I bow to Him wherever He be."

CHAPTER XXXIII

AT HOME TO ALL MANKIND

The tour to Achal Batala and Multan was the last of his tours. He returned to Kartarpur in about 1531 A.D. and began to live there as the old father of his people. He had been to distant places and had proclaimed his great message of Love, Work, Service, and Devotion, in different lands. Wherever he had gone, the people had flocked to listen to his sacred Songs of the Lord as thirsty travellers flock round an oasis in a wide desert. When he had left these places, the work of reclaiming others had been carried on by his faithful disciples. In each place a temple of God had been erected, a *Sat Sang* or a Fellowship of Seekers of the True Lord had been established, and the devoutest disciple had been placed in charge of the little colony. Morning and evening the disciples of a place assembled in the temple of God and sang the Word of God as given them by Guru Nanak. During the day, while carrying on their honest trades and occupations, they kept their thoughts ever fixed on the Guru and God. To bring other people to the Path laid down by the Guru by showing to them the beauty of their own lives was their chief delight. No wonder then that in distant places like China and Egypt, where no one could go afterwards to speak to the people about Guru Nanak and his Faith, he is still remembered with affection and reverence.

Life at Kartarpur.

The life at Kartarpur was a demonstration of all his ideas and teachings put into actual practice. He had advocated a wholesome combination of action and devotion, a complete reconciliation between ascetism and householders'

life. He had said that both were necessary and should go hand in hand. There was a fatal falsehood in the idea that we should turn our back upon the world in order to love and realize God, and think to glorify our Creator by ignoring His creation. This ascetic method was at best an imperfect method for it confused the world as God made it with the world as man had marred it. We should not turn away from life but should see God and His Glory in and through it. There was, of course, the temptation in this sinful world to love the creature more than the Creator, to forget the Giver in our infatuation for the gift, yet the true remedy for this did not lie in becoming indifferent to all created things, but in so loving them that this love might lead us to the love of the Creator, till we come to love God in our neighbour and our neighbour in God. It was the duty of all religious people to carry their religious spirit and principles into the details of the secular life. Secular life was not to be denounced as an obstacle in the path of soul's progress towards God. It should rather be the medium of our religious life, our vocation, the mode in which to realize our love for God and man.

The Spiral Stair to Heaven.

Guru Nanak believed that for a man who has become spiritually alive action and devotion form a spiral stair by which he ascends to the Abode of the Lord. Before undertaking each action in his daily life such a man prays for divine assistance ; for no spiritual act can be complete till it has been first prayed for and then done. This practice ennobles his nature. After each occasion of prayer and action he feels prompted to a purer prayer and a nobler act In this way he rises heavenwards. This was the path that Guru Nanak had shown to his people in all lands and on which he now walked in the sight of all, so that all doubts

about the practicability of his teachings might be removed. To the Sidhs and other ascetics he had, as stated already, said that it was wrong for a man to run away from life even for the purpose of finding God. True asceticism, he had said, consisted in looking for God in His creatures and in coming back with our treasure, as soon as we had found it, and sharing it with all whose souls are athirst for God, and even with those who know not their soul or its need for God. This he had been doing all his life. He had been sharing his limitless treasures with all. He had enabled his people to find God in the world and then to exert themselves to find the world in God, to try to make all things according to the pattern which he had shown them in his Songs of the Lord. At Kartarpur he set himself to show how this was to be done.

The Happy Holy Colony.

He resumed his life of a tiller of soil and a cultivator of human souls. In his fields he loved to raise crops of wheat and rice for the satisfaction of his people's physical hunger. But, at the same time, he sowed in their souls the seed of divine life, and nourished each seedling with a fatherly love and care. He worked in the fields. His disciples who came to him from distant lands worked with him. It was a happy, holy colony at Kartarpur where each thought it a blessing to work and toil for all and where all were anxious for the welfare of each. In the words of Frederic Pincott it was a " brotherhood of God-fearing republicans". Here was a revolutionary idealism being put into practice by men who saw God in the world and the world in God, and whom the Love and Adoration of God pointed the way to the Love and Service of mankind. With the joy of un-interrupted communion with God enthroned in their hearts and souls, with the Word of God ever on their lips, with their hands

and feet ever busy in the service of God in man, they ever lived in God and God ever lived in them. This was Guru Nanak's noble family, his Holy Fellowship that he had come to establish in a world torn by hate, strife, and struggle.

The Table of God.

To the Table of God laid by Guru Nanak all—men, women, and children, Hindus and Muhammadans, rich and poor, high and low—were equally welcome at all times. Bread and water were ready for all at all hours of the day ; the bread of wheat as well as the Bread of God, the water from the well as well as the Water of Life Everlasting, were given freely to all from the in-exhaustible treasury of Guru Nanak. The hungry were fed, the diseased were healed, the distressed were comforted, the bereaved were consoled, and the restless wandering souls were made steady in God.

The Day's Programme.

Every morning, about a watch before daybreak, all would get up, bathe and sit in quiet contemplation of God. Then they sang to themselves the Word of God as given to them by the Guru. Then all assembled to chant together the great morning hymn of Guru Nanak called the *Asa di Var.* The morning congregation then broke up after prayers for the welfare of the whole world and for the prosperity of the Faith and after distribution of the sacred food. Then all repaired to their respective duties, some to work in the kitchen, some in the fields, some at the handmill, and some at the loom or needle. Then they would all assemble in the *Langar* to feed themselves from the Guru's store ; for, with them all that they had, whether produced by their own toil or by that of their friends and neighbours, belonged to the Guru.* Each found immeasurable joy in adding to the

* "*Dáná páni Guru ká, taihl bháwná Sikhán di*—bread and water are God's, loving service alone is rendered by Sikhs," has become a common saying among the Sikhs.

Guru's store. No one thought of being a drone. The day thus passed in useful activity—bodies employed in service and souls entwined round the feet of the Lord. In the evening all assembled again. After the evening Song and Prayers all took their food and retired to rest for the night But before lying down to sleep each one collected his soul, lifted it to the bosom of God, silently chanted the Song of Praise, the *Kirtan Sohila,* and lay down to sleep in the lap of his Maker. Such was the life led by the Guru and his people in the blessed, holy colony at Kartarpur and such is the life that the Guru wants all to lead if they would taste true Joy of life lived in God.

Death of Mardana.

It was at Kartarpur that Bhai Mardana, Guru Nanak's rebeck player, musician, and companion in most of his journeys, breathed his last. Guru Nanak had enquired from Bhai Mardana how he desired his body to be disposed of. He was a Muhammadan by birth but a Sikh by faith. He had no will apart from the will of the Guru. So he replied, "When, with thy grace, my spirit, the 'I' in this mould of clay, goes into everlasting bliss, what matters it for me how the body is disposed of. Do unto it as thou pleasest. Only ferry me across this ocean of the world for the sake of the Word of God which I have been singing to thee and thy people." The Guru blessed his departing disciple and brother, and ordered that his body should be cremated. Mardana's son took his place as the rebeck player and musician in the Guru's Darbar.

The Guru's Big Family.

The Guru's Sikhs scattered over distant, different lands constituted one big family with Guru Nanak as the dear, old Father of them all. Each Sikh, wherever he was, worked for the Guru's family. To feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to give shelter to the homeless, and to

perform numerous other acts of love and sympathy was the delight of the Sikhs.* Each year, and oftener if possible, *Sangat* from all places that the Guru had visited in his younger days came to Kartarpur to replenish their spiritual faculty at the Fountainhead. Each brought for the Guru's household articles lovingly made or produced by his or her own hands. Grain, clothes, and numerous other such things were thus added to the Guru's store and thence distributed to all according to their need.

* Munshi Sujan Rai of Batala, writing in 1695-98 A.D. testifes from personal observation that the Sikhs considered it their religious duty to feed and serve all who called at their door. "The faith," writes he, "which the Sikhs have in their Guru is seldom met with in other religions. They consider it an act of devotion to serve the passers by in the name of their Guru, whose Word they repeat every moment of their life. If a person turns up at their door at midnight, and calls in the name of Baba Nanak, though he may be a stranger, or even a thief, robber, or a scoundrel, they serve him according to his needs, as they would serve a brother and friend."

CHAPTER XXXIV

MORE LOVE CONQUESTS

The Boy Saint Bura.

One day, the Guru was sitting under a tree at Kartarpur. A boy came that way grazing cows. The Guru saw in this boy something which was to make him one of his most respected and renowned disciples. He sent for the boy, and, seating him near himself, asked him his name. "My name is Bura," replied the boy, "I am a Jat of Ramdas." The Guru then bade him go and look after his cows. The boy kept sitting and said, "But Master, do tell me thy pleasure. Wherefore didst thou call me?" The Guru replied, "That will do for the present. My purpose in calling you to me has been served. You may go."

Bura went away. But he, too, had recognised his Master. His heart was dancing with joy. He could not sleep that night. The glorious, joy-inspiring person of the Guru was present before his mind's eyes throughout the night and he bowed to it again and again. Early next morning he started from home with some butter as a humble offering for the Guru. Reaching the Guru's Darbar, he placed the butter before the Guru and begged for deliverance from birth and death. The Guru said, "You are a child yet. Go and make merry. Such serious thoughts are rarely found to interest boys of your age. How came you by them, dear boy?"

An Old Head on Young Shoulders.

Bura replied "Thus, O master. Some time back a band of Pathans passed by our village. They forcibly cut away all our crops—ripe, unripe, and all. We were all helpless. We saw ourselves plundered in broad day-light but could do nothing to thwart the tyrants.

Since then, the thought has ever been haunting me, 'If all of us could not save our crops from the Pathans, who can save us from the hand of Death who is far more powerful than the Pathans? Who knows on whom—young or old—the hand of Death may fall next? Who knows that I might be the next victim doomed to quit this life in the unripe condition of childhood?' This thought has made me restless. I had heard of you. When you called me to your presence, something within me was touched to the core. I felt an assurance slowly creeping into my heart that you possessed the power to allay my fear and fulfil my desire. Hence it is that I have again come to you unbidden Turn me not away with a refusal Let me be thy slave for ever."

The Guru replied, "You carry an old head on your boyish shoulders. You talk like an old man. All right, my *Buddha Balik*, my old child, listen to what I say and keep it ever in your heart and soul God is far more powerful than Death. If you become His accepted servant, the hand of Death will not touch you. So ever think of Him, love Him, and serve Him with all your heart Let your body be busy in loving service of God's creatures, and your heart, mind, and spirit be ever in tune with the Almighty Father. Then you need have no fears"

The Honourable Privilege.

Bura became Bhai Buddha. He stayed with the Guru, listening joyfully to his Songs of the Lord, and doing all sorts of service for the Guru and his people. In a very short time he came to be one of the most devoted and respected of the Guru's disciples So well was the Master pleased with him, that a little before his own ascension, he appointed him to perform the sacred ceremony of impressing the saffron *tilak*, or the mark of Gurudom, on the forehead of the second Guru. This honourable privilege he continued

to have till his death at the ripe age of one hundred and seven years. He had, by then impressed the sacred mark on the foreheads of the five successors of Guru Nanak

Three More Love Conquests.

It was during one of his minor tours into the neighbouring country that the Guru won to his Path two more renowned Muslim Pirs—Ubare Khan and Abdul Rahman. A friend of the former of these, Shaikh Malo by name, had met the Guru. Discerning the light of Allah illumining the Guru's person, Malo had bowed to him. Guru Nanak had opened the eyes of his soul. He had become transfigured. He had obtained the gift of the Word of God from the Minstrel of God. He had been shown the way to the Abode of the Lord. His heart had tasted a joy which he would not exchange with even the pleasures of Paradise. He hoped to meet and be one with the Supreme Spirit and cared not for even salvation or *Nirvan.*

Ubare Khan.

Ubare Khan was also a seeker after the Lord. He had sat at the feet of many a Pir and Faqir, but the restless beatings of his heart had not been quieted. The hunger for the Lord that he felt in his mind and soul had not been assuaged. Once Shaikh Malo met him. Ubare Khan at once detected a change, a transfiguration, in the character, conduct, and outward appearance of his friend. "So Malo has met some Perfect One and got his whole being dyed in Love and Light." Thus thought Ubare Khan as he saw his friend Malo. He enquired from his transfigured friend how he had come by his blissful condition.

"I shall tell you," replied Malo, "for a friend should share his joy with a friend who lacks good luck. But I fear, you will refuse to drink at my fountain of Life and Bliss, for it flows from the divinely illuminated form of one who is a

'Hindu' by birth. Your Islamic pride, I fear, will keep you stiff and cold.

"When I find," said Ubare Khan "that my learned friend Malo, whose zeal for Islam had brought many under the Prophet's banner, has now met his Master in a 'Hindu', why should I let my unsophisticated pride stand in my way? I shall go, any how, and see for myself."

The Divine Angler's Hook.

So Ubare Khan went to Guru Nanak who was then staying at a little distance from the village. On his way he thought out many questions to test the Guru's powers and knowledge. He resolved to stand on his dignity until he found in the Guru the qualities that could entitle him to his homage. But as soon as he saw the radiant face of the Guru, he forgot all his carefully thought out questions and all his resolves to keep his head erect. One look of the Master pierced to his heart and held it fast as the angler's hook grips the fish in water. But there was no pain. Rather a little elevation of the spirits accompanied this first experience. He went up to the Guru, and bowing a little, took his seat near him.

The Guru read Ubare Khan's mind like an open book. So he said to him, "Well friend, do not entangle yourself in the pride of power and creed. In himself neither a Hindu nor a Muhammadan can be less or more dear to God. So, none can claim superiority on the mere ground of belonging to this or that creed. It is character formed by and expressed in good, noble, selfless acts of love and service that makes a man's progress towards God. All disputes about one being superior to another are positively harmful as they give food to pride of heart. Think of Him, friend, and, be ever engaged in adoring Him. You will then cease to hate anybody. A deep, all-embracing love will then fill your

whole being and inspire you to acts of help, service, and sympathy; for you will see the light of God in all His creatures."

Ubare Khan found his Master in the Guru. He bowed at his feet. A current as of electricity sent a thrill through his heart and soul. He rose a changed man, became a disciple of the Guru, vowed to pass his days in a life-long discipline in the Guru's academy of Love, Service, and Devotion. His wife got the spark from him and became a slave of the Master whom her eyes had not seen but who came to dwell in her pure, faithful heart.

Pir Abdul Rahman.

In that locality there also lived a haughty, powerful Muhammadan Pir named Abdul Rahman. Hearing that Ubare Khan had become a disciple of a 'Hindu', the Pir came to remonstrate with him. Ubare Khan, whom the love-shafts of the Guru had pierced through and through, stood his ground well. He did not lose his temper at the unbecoming words used by the Pir about the Guru. He calmly advised the Pir to go and see the Master. The Pir thundered and threatened. "I will drive him away," said he and went his way.

On the following day the Guru left the place that he had selected for his stay and walked towards the village. Why? Because he was drawn by the love of a dear disciple and also because he felt an urge to go and slake the thirst of a restless soul. He had on his body a richly embroidered silk cloth which Ubare Khan had humbly presented to him as an offering from his wife. Ubare Khan was with the Guru. Pir Abdul Rahman was seen approaching from the direction of the village. Ubare Khan remembered the Pir's threat and became a bit afraid. The Guru looked at him and said, "Courage friend, God, whose servants we are, is always at hand to guide and protect us."

The Pir saw the Guru and Ubare Khan. "Look at his rich robes," thought he, "and yet people are foolish enough to call him a hermit." He deliberated for a while whether he should turn aside, pass by unconcerned, give the Guru a piece of his haughty Muhammadan mind, or accost him cordially and have a talk with him to see if he had any of the powers attributed to him by his disciples. Lost in these deliberations he did not notice that the Guru had come quite close to him. As soon as he saw the God-lit countenance of the Guru so near him, he forgot all his deliberations. He jumped down from his horse and saluted the Guru. But his next thought was, "Should I put any questions or quietly depart?" The Guru divined his thoughts and replied to him in words similar to those that he had addressed to Ubare Khan. At the end he added, "Do not let yourself get entangled in outward appearances and conventional forms. True renunciation has its seat at the heart, not on the outside of the body. This or any other dress makes no difference where the heart is free from any attachment for the goods and pleasures of this world. Rags and robes are equally acceptable to the servants of God."

The Pir was conquered. In all humility he bowed at the feet of the Guru and begged for Light, Love, and, Life. The Guru bade him rise and be blessed. The Pir entered the Holy Fellowship of adorers of the Beloved, Bounteous Lord, and friends, brothers, and loving servants of mankind.

CHAPTER XXXV

RETURN TO THE ETERNAL HOME

Numerous other love-conquests were made by the Guru during his residence at Kartarpur. Of these we shall mention one more as it has an important connection with the subsequent history of the Nation founded by Guru Nanak.

Baba Laihna, the Durga Worshipper.

Baba Laihna was the son of a rich man of *Matte ki Sarai* in the modern district of Ferozepur. He was married to the daughter of another rich man of Khadur in the Amritsar district. His birth place having been plundered by robbers, Baba Laihna came over to Khadur and made it his home. He was a worshipper of the Hindu goddess Durga. Being rich and strong and fervent in faith, and possessing the genius of a born leader of men, he was accepted by his fellow-worshippers as their chief. Every year he used to lead a procession of Durga worshippers to the Temple of the goddess at Jawala Mukhi in the district of Kangra. The flame coming out from the volcano there was regarded by the simple people to be a manifestation of Durga.

Ordinarily, he would light for himself, in his innermost room, a little lamp of kneaded flour fed with ghee. Its flame was to him a representation of his goddess of Flame. He would sit watching it for hours in great devotion. Sometimes the spark that was in his soul would jump up in an attempt to mingle with the object of his worship. He would then dance round and round the flame in a rapture of zeal and joy.

Thus was Baba Laihna passing his days. Like the one who was to be his Master and was later to infuse his entire

spirit into him, he too was waiting for the call. The call came at last through an unexpected medium.

The Fascinating Song of God.

In the village of Khadur there lived a humble Sikh of Guru Nanak. His name was Bhai Jodha. One fine morning, as Baba Laihna was going out for a bath after hi night-long vigil before the flame, he heard Bhai Jodha singing to himself the Word of God as sung by Guru Nanak. The words of the Song struck a sympathetic chord in his heart. In mute adoration he stood listening there. At its conclusion, he enquired from Bhai Jodha whose Song it was that he had been singing so fascinatingly. He was told, "It is the Word of God brought down on earth for us by Guru Nanak."

The name 'Guru Nanak' startled Baba Laihna. Some deep-set, almost extinct memory of a close kinship with the Guru was stirred into life. The very name of the Guru, uttered lovingly by one of his disciples, aroused in Baba Laihna thoughts and feelings which rendered him mute for a time. He then requested Bhai Jodha to teach him the charming Song. What greater joy could there be to a Sikh than that to be had in imparting the Guru's Word of God to others? Baba Laihna learnt the Divine Song. He went about singing it all day long.

Visit to the Sacred City.

Soon a strong desire grew in him for a sight of him whose Songs of the Lord had captivated his soul. When the time came for the annual pilgrimage to Jawala Mukhi, the Temple of the Flame-goddess Durga, he persuaded his fellow-worshippers to go by the way of Kartarpur. When the band of the pilgrims halted near the sacred city, Baba Laihna went to see the Guru. On the way, at a little distance from the village, he met an old man who was making a

round of his fields. Baba Laihna enquired from him the way leading to the abode of Guru Nanak. The old man replied with a smile, "Follow on, brother. I shall lead you to your destination." The old man walked on in front, while Baba Laihna followed him on horseback. Near the main gate of the Dharmsala or the Guru's Temple of God, the old man requested the stranger to get down from the horse, tether it to a peg, and enter the building. He would meet the Guru there.

Two Kindred Spirits Meet.

Baba Laihna entered the Dharmsala. He met a Sikh going about his duties in connection with the Guru's Langar. By him Baba Laihna was directed to the room where the Guru was to be found. He went as directed and entered. The sight threw him into confusion; for he found that the Guru was no other than the old man who had led him to that place. The thought that he had unwittingly shown disrespect to the Guru pained and worried him. The Guru smiled and said, "Don't worry, brother. You came here as a guest and a stranger. I only did my duty." Baba Laihna could make no reply. The Guru seated the visitor near him and enquired his name.

"My name is Laihna," replied the visitor. "I am a resident of Khadur."

"Right welcome you are," said the Guru, "You have come at last for your *laihna* that is due from me to you. I have been waiting for you." The Guru then talked to him sweetly of God and of man's duty towards Him and His creation. Baba Laihna threw away the little bells that he wore on his ankies and wrists to dance before the goddess; for he had no need of the goddess now. He let his companions go on their way, beating their cymbals and drums and ringing their bells as usual. He had found his Master

and his own self in Guru Nanak. A touch of the Guru's feet, a look on his glorious, God-lit countenance, and his soft sweet words of divine consolation, had revived in Baba Laihna far off, half-forgotten memories of a close divine kinship with the Guru, and had filled him through and through with a joy that he had never known before.

Baba Laihna Begins Service of Man.

The Guru then advised him to go and see his people at home. Baba Laihna agreed. But after only a day's stay at Khadur he returned to Kartarpur where he had left his heart. He had seen how all Sikhs worked joyfully at the Guru's holy colony. He would make a beginning. So he took a heavy load of salt on his head and walked all the way to Kartarpur. He would not take a horse or cooly to carry the dear load. When the old mother of the Sikhs, Mata Sulakhni, saw this richly dressed man who was evidently unused to hard toil, bringing in a heavy load of salt from such a long distance, she was greatly affected, and treated and served him kindly as a mother would do her darling, dutiful son.

Learning from her that the Guru was in the fields engaged in his labour of love for his Sikhs, Baba Laihna took his way thither. He found that the Guru and his Sikhs were weeding a paddy field. Baba Laihna made an obeisance to the Guru and began to do what others were doing. The work was sure to soil and stain his rich silk robes; but to him service was now dearer by far than any thing else. After a short time the Guru asked him to give up weeding and take a bundle of weeds and grass to the cattle shed. Baba Laihna obeyed. Accordingly a heavy load of wet, mud-dripping grass was placed on his head. The wet mud falling from the grass stained his silk garments. But he had no thoughts to spare for his clothes. Mata Sulakhni saw him bringing in a second

load that day and also saw his mud-stained garments of silk.

In the evening, when the Guru returned from the fields, the old Mother of the Sikhs pointed towards Baba Laihna and said, "Sire, what a strange welcome you have given to this rather delicate young man! He brought a heavy load of salt all the way from Khadur and then, a short while after, you placed on his head another equally heavy load of wet, dripping grass. See how his garments of silk have become stained with mud."

"You are mistaken, good lady," replied the Guru, "He did not bear loads of salt and grass, but he bore the burden of suffering humanity. These are not mud stains; they are the sacred saffron spots which mark him out as the chosen one of the Lord. He has been anointed as the saviour of afflicted souls."

Becomes an Ideal Sikh.

For many years did Baba Laihna serve the Guru and his Sikhs at Kartarpur. His life became a practical lesson in Sikhism. It has since been ever before the eyes of his Sikhs as the ideal to the attainment of which all their thoughts, feelings, and efforts should be dedicated. His faith and love were perfect and complete. Well had he realized in his heart of hearts and shown it in his actual life that, before expecting to be accepted by the Master, the Sikh has to place his body, mind, and soul, and all, at the service and disposal of the Guru and God. When later he described in Divine Songs the essential qualities of lovers and servants of the Guru and God, he spoke from a heart and mind enriched with experience of that type of service and love. Here is what he sang :—

'What sort of love is that which permits one to be allured by another?

He alone is a lover true who gets completely merged in the object of his love.

' What sort of service is that in which the fear of the master does not depart ?

He alone deserves to be called a servant true who gets thoroughly absorbed in the love of his master. '

It was with such a love that Baba Laihna loved Guru Nanak. It was as such a 'servant true' that he rejoiced to obey the spoken and unspoken commands of his Beloved. In fact, so completely did he imbibe the Guru's spirit, so thoroughly was he imbued with the Guru's ideals, so fully did he identify his will with the will of the Guru, that a simple nod or wink from the Guru which others could hardly perceive, was enough to dispatch him speeding, most joyously, to tasks which others would have pronounced to be too hard, tedious, irksome, or repulsive, and below their dignity even.

Becomes One with the Guru.

For years did he perform this labour of love and devotion. Love begot love. Beyond all expression was the love which Guru Nanak felt for him. In fact, the Guru loved him far more dearly than he loved his own sons. In due course the Servant and the Master became one. Guru Nanak declared Baba Laihna to be a part of himself, his *Angad**.

The Last Prayer of a Living Soul.

In the meantime, Sikhs from all parts of the world which the Guru had visited in his early days came regularly to pay their love and homage to the old Father of his people. His name had become a household word in places far and near. As a sample of the faith which people of all creeds had in him we shall give below a simple incident of his last days on earth. It has been seen that several Muslim Sufi Faqirs had become devoted followers of

* *Ang* is a Panjabee word meaning body or limb,

the Guru. One of them was Pir Baha-ul-Din of Multan. The Pir was old. He felt his end drawing near. He had no fear of death, for the Guru had freed him of that fear long before. But another thought began to trouble him more and more. How would he bear to be away from the Master ? The thought of the impending separation made him miserable. He sent one of his followers, of whom there were thousands, to the Guru with the following prayer, "O Good Master, I have loaded my load ; I am about to start on my journey to the other world. The thought that thou wilt not be with me there is a constant torture to me. Kindly do something for me, so that I may have no cause for anxiety. How good would it be if I could go holding the end of thy garment."

The Guru's Message of Love and Hope.

The Guru sent back a gracious reply, consoling the Pir and assuring him of a happy future. "What fear should they have," said he, "who have lived in constant communion with the Lord and have led a life of love, service, and devotion ? They do not die. Rather, they return to their Real, Eternal Home in the bosom of the Lord. So have no fears. I shall not long be away from you : for my life's journey in the world is done. I shall follow you in about six weeks."

The Pir kissed the paper containing the Guru's message of love and hope. He bowed again and again in the direction of Kartarpur and blessed the bearer of the kindly message. Then he said to his followers, "Forty days of separation will have to be borne still. How happy would I have been if he had accompanied me and lighted my way to that Home."

Baba Laihna Becomes Guru Angad.

The Guru knew that the day of his return to the bosom of the Lord was approaching. He installed Baba Laihna on the *gadui*. Baba Buddha anointed the new Guru with a saffron mark on the forehead. Guru Nanak then placed five coppers and a cocoa-nut before Baba Laihna and, bowing before him, hailed him as Guru Angad. Thus did the Spirit which Guru Nanak had got as a gift from God enter the heart and soul of Guru Angad. Thus did Guru Nanak pay unto Baba Laihna the *laihna* which he had declared to have been due from himself. He gave him his own spirit and light, and entrusted him with the duty of keeping aloft the divine torch for the guidance of the people. This was on the fifth day of the light half of Assu Sambat 1596.

The Song of Joy and Union.

The time for Guru Nanak's departure from the world had come. He laid himself on a neat, cosy bed. He was about to meet his Lord. The Bride was to return unto the bosom of the Spouse. To the disciples who had assembled around him, he said :—

"The appointed hour hath come -
The hour of marriage and union with the Spouse Divine.
Assemble ye my comrades ;
Cluster round me and lift up your merry notes ;
Sing the praises of the Divine, Comforting Lord.
Anoint the Bride,
Pour oil on her forehead,
Give her your blessings,
And pray that she may meet her Lord
And be happy with Him for aye.
Sing ye my friends the praises of the Spouse
For the appointed hour of union hath come."

Thus singing the Word of God to the last moment of his life on this earth, and five days after he had installed

Guru Angad as his successor, Guru Nanak returned to the Lord whence he had come in response to the call of afflicted humanity. This happened on the tenth day of the light half of Assu Sambat 1596.

Great was the grief which filled the hearts of his devoted disciples. Guru Angad's grief was the deepest. The first shock of separation from the Master was so severe that Guru Angad cried aloud in love's deep despair:—

> " Better by far to die
> Before the dear one, the object of our love, does so.
> What use in life is there
> What for to live in the world
> After the dear one is gone for ever?"
>
> (*Shri Rag Ki Var, Slok*)

But Guru Nanak's last injunctions restrained them from giving themselves up to despair and gloom.

Dispute About His Remains.

In all extant biographies of the Guru it is recorded that a short time before the Guru's Spirit had left his body a dispute arose between his followers regarding the disposal of his earthly remains. Sikhs drawn from the Muhammadan community wanted to bury his body, whereas those drawn from the Hindu community wanted to cremate it. As the dispute was growing warm, one of the Sikhs suggested that the best thing was to get the matter decided by a reference to the Guru himself. When the Guru was approached he said, "Let each side to the dispute place some fresh flowers, one on my right and the other on my left. They whose flowers remain fresh till morning shall have the right to dispose of my body as they please." This was done. Next morning, when the sheet was removed, the Guru's body was not to be found there. Secret powers of Nature

had dissolved it into its constituent elements.* Flowers of both the parties had remained fresh as ever! So both could lay equal claims to the Guru. One party buried their flowers and the other cremated them. On the spots they erected two buildings in memory of the Guru. Both have since been washed away by the river Ravi. Some time after that another shrine was built by a devoted Sikh. This exists up to these days. Still later, one of the great-grandsons of the Guru erected another shrine on the left bank of the river and called it Dehra Baba Nanak.

Thus, after a sojourn of seventy years, five months, and seven days this Minstrel of God, this divinely gifted guide and loving friend of mankind, returned to his eternal Home in the bosom of his Father. The godly gifts of unbounded Love, Life, and Adoration, of world-wide human sympathy, of Faith, Joy, and Hope without measure, of the Word of God that flowed into his heart and soul at all hours and that raised men to the level of God to be one with Him for ever, of the Song of the Lord which charmed human souls out of decay, woe, and suffering and made them partakers of infinite Joy and everlasting life—all these he breathed into the heart and soul of his successor, Guru Angad. Guru Nanak had declared again and again that his own Guru or Teacher had been the Infinite, Absolute, All-pervading Lord. Now as he became one with his teacher after a life of toil and

* Those who have conducted researches into Spiritual and Psychical phenomena—some of the world's best scientists having been among them—have found and certified that, among many other wonderful, inexplicable by the known laws of nature, and hence apparently supernatural phenomena which they have witnessed again and again under the strictest invigilance and caution, has been the passing of flowers, harmoniums, and other things through locked and sealed doors. Something of the same sort must have happened with the Guru's earthly remains.

Readers who are interested in the subject are invited to read Appendix B and follow up with the study of books suggested there.

loving, selfless devotion to the cause of humanity, Baba Laihna, by his own efforts and the grace of God and Guru, became one with his teacher, Guru Nanak, nay became Guru Nanak himself. He was to be the second Guru Nanak. On him now devolved the sweet arduous task of conveying the message of the Lord to all, of weaning men from their Godless habits of body, mind, and soul, of awakening them to a life of the spirit, of making all men adorers of God and loving servants of their fellowmen.

CHAPTER XXXVI

RECAPITULATION

Let us now look back and take a general view of the work which had awaited Guru Nanak when, in response to the call of a suffering, afflicted humanity, the Bounteous Lord sent him forth into the world. We shall afterwards try to appreciate what he did towards the performance of that work. In the first two chapters of this book an attempt has been made to picture the times in which Guru Nanak had to live and work. We have seen how ugly were the times and how wretched was the plight of the Indian people. Cries of woe and anguish rose from innumerable hearts. In fact whole humanity was crying for a saviour.

The Mixed Call.

This call of humanity was not a simple one. It was composed of innumerable troubled voices that rose from the heart of man. It reached him in the form of a confused murmur that sprang from human depths and that, comprising in it all tears, all torments, all afflictions that weighed on human hearts, became for him the sigh of creation, the sad, still music of humanity, the supreme call that urged him to do his duty to man and God.

Of Subjects.

There was the call of the subjects against the rulers who were making a hell of this land. Conversion to Islam at the point of sword, and lawless tyranny, under which neither life, property, nor honour was safe, drove the miserable people to the verge of ruin and despair. Then there were the natural leaders of the pople, the landed and propertied classes, who

had thrown in their lot with the foreign oppressors and were ever officiously ready to demonstrate their loyalty by active help in suppressing any signs of public dissatisfaction. They throve on the people's blood. The subjects were being crushed under the heel of power. Guru Nanak describes the state of affairs in the following words :—

> "The kings have butchers become ; misrule, tyranny, and violence are the knives in their bloody hands.
> In the mad confusion thus caused by the crimes of kings righteousness hath taken wings and flown from the land as do birds from a tree on fire.
> Sin and Falsehood darken the face of the earth
> In the deep, thick darkness as impossible it is to get a glimpse of Virtue and Truth as to see the moon on a gloomy moonless night."
> (*Var Majh*)

Of the Laity.

There was then the call of the laity against the class of men who had constituted themselves the custodians and dispensers of religious knowledge and were, by withholding from the people the food of the spirit, starving their souls. Cant and superstition had taken the place of piety and devotion. The priests themselves were hypocrites who neither believed nor practised what they professed. Guru Nanak speaks of them in the following words :—

> "Those who ply the dagger as butchers of men wear the sacred thread round their necks.........
> Falsehood is their capital and lies do form their trade :
> They support themselves by telling lies ;
> Righteousness and honour are far indeed from their lives.
> Falsehood prevaileth all round, O Nanak.
> They have the sacred marks on their foreheads, and wear the prescribed loin-cloth formally tucked in behind.
> They pose as men of religion,
> But they are butchers of the world with bloody knives in their hands."
> (*Asa di Var*)

Social Parasites

There were also the pseudo-religious people like *yogis*, *bairagis*, ascetics of various types, who had renounced useful activity, and lived on the honest earnings of the laity lives of sloth-

ful ease, and, in many cases, even of vice and luxury. They were not only oppressing the people in order to enforce their manifold exactions, but were also leading them astray by preaching that the highest bliss could not be attained by men leading lives of service and useful toil.

There were also the religious heads of the Muhammadans who had come to be feeders of the flames of religious bigotry, fanaticism, and persecution. There lives, too, were so ugly that Guru Nanak speaks of them as "eaters of men who fail not to say the prescribed Muhammadan prayers". There were also the several religious orders among the Muhammadans who lived as social parasites and were a source of great trouble to people engaged in honest trades. Among Hindus and Muhammadans alike all who posed as men of religion were spiritually dead and were killing the people's souls.

Communal Hatred.

Then there was the cry of the Hindus against their Muhammadan oppressors who were forcing them to embrace Islam at the point of sword and were committing untold atrocities on their life and honour. The Hindus could not but hate their heartless oppressors. Thus there arose from the human heart a cry against the choking fumes of communal hate and bitterness that overspread the entire length and breadth of India.

There was also the cry of the low-caste people against the socalled high castes. The innumerable indignities which these poor, downtrodden people had to bear need not be narrated here; for we can see them still practised even in this century of progress and enlightenment.

The Exploiters of the Poor.

There was furthermore the cry of the poor, destitute, and starving millions against their masters and exploiters who fattened themselves on the life blood of their weak and helpless neighbours. There was the cry of the toilers

and producers of country's wealth against all types of able-bodied parasites and sluggards who shrank from toil and labour and yet, by force, law, or device, under one sort of pretence or another, managed to take away the lion's share of the fruits of people's labour.

The Irresistible Urge.

These were some of the cries which rose from the heart of man to the feet of the Father and in response to which he sent forth Guru Nanak into the world. These were the cries which forced the Guru to quit his restful life in the seclusion of his village. We know that he could have, if he had so liked, spent in his village a life of rest, contentment, and religious devotion. But that was not in his power or nature to do. The Lord that sat enthroned in his heart, whom he found pervading every nook and corner of the world, would not permit him to sit idle. The cry of humanity that penetrated to his heart would not let him live in peace and plenty when millions round him were suffering pangs of physical and spiritual starvation. He would go out to them and distribute among them, according to their need and capacity, the bread of God which he alone could share with all.

Guru Nanak had heard these cries since his childhood. Night and day the call of humanity would quietly steal into his heart and soul and, gathering force and volume, grow into a loud lament as that of a child left all alone and lost in a vast limitless wilderness. It made him sad to think what man had made of man, but it also filled him with an irresistible longing to be up and doing. Hence it had thrown him into mighty qualms for days at a stretch, making him forsake food, sport, and sleep. But conscious of the supreme magnitude of the task, he had, as it were, muzzled his godly, fractious heart in order to wait for his Lord's

signal before he would respond to the incessant call. He had to gather within himself, till he was full to over-flowing, Divine Light, Life, Joy, Hope, and Love, as they quietly flowed into his heart, mind, and spirit, from the Supreme Source of Good, Beauty, and Truth. It was for these that humanity cried. It was, therefore, of these that he had to make himself an inexhaustible reservoir before setting out to slake the thirst of mankind.

His Huge Campaign.

Each time that he heard the call, he looked within and above him to see if the time for response had come; for he was waiting for the call both from within and above. He would go forth when bidden by God who dwelt in and around him on every side. That call came at last. He made an immediate response. Distributing to the poor all that he had of the world's goods, and donning an ascetic's dress, he started on his huge campaign to reform the world and end the pain. Taking orders from his Master he became His strolling Minstrel, singing to men in all lands of His Grace and Glory, of Love, Truth, and Service, of the duty of all towards each and each towards all. He gave up his family so that he might become a friend and brother of all mankind. The whole human race was thenceforth his family. He wandered through distant lands so that he might rescue humanity from limitless wandering in the whirlpool of transmigration; he took upon himself the toils and risks of long journeys through the unsafest tracts so that he might make this world safe for God-fearing wayfarers in the life's journey; he embraced a life of poverty and privation so that he might make the rich and the poor of this earth the rightful heirs of divine, immeasurable riches of the Love of God and man. In all places that he visited he met the oppressors as well as the oppressed, the tyrants and their helpless victims, the rulers and the ruled, the wicked and the meek. He met them all

and, with the radiant flame of love and devotion, lighted up their dark hearts and souls, and burnt away all dross that filled and polluted them. He roused in the hearts of all a sense of the presence of God in their midst, of His unbounded love for all; of the dignity of human life; and of the duties of man towards God, his neighbours, and his own self—both body and soul. He carried to all men his message of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. He spoke to all in their own respective languages and made them partakers of the bliss and calm which filled him through and through. In all places he founded his Holy Fellowship, the "fraternity of God-fearing republicans" in which all were equal in all respects. All distinctions based on birth and position in society were removed.* He proclaimed to all the great truth that a man's progress in this as well as in the life to come depends on his own thoughts, feelings, acts, and efforts, in this world.

Thus it was that Guru Nanak did his heaven-ordained, self-chosen task. Thus it was that he responded to the call of humanity and God, and, touring through distant lands, met and reformed kings, magnates, yogis, Pandits, monsters, Pirs, Faqirs, and Mullas; exalted the lowly; revitalized the dead and dying souls of those whom he met; and demonstrated to the world how a man of religion should live in the world and yet be above it. He liberated the human soul from the choking, crushing burden of unholy passions and desires, and set it to fly Godwards on the wings of the Word of God.†

* For a detailed study of what the Sikh Gurus did towards removing caste restrictions and banishing untouchability read the writer's "*Sikh Gurus and Untouchability.*

† For a more detailed study of this topic the reader is invited to study the writer's *Guru Nanak's response to the Call of Humanity.*

CHAPTER XXXVII

GLIMPSES OF GURU NANAK'S PERSON

We have seen Guru Nanak at his heaven-ordained task of revitalizing the dead and dying spirit of humanity whom he found burning in the fire of hate, despair, and unbelief; of soothing, with his words and acts of love and sympathy, the fluttering hearts of a troubled world; of rousing people to a sense of their divine origin and ideal, and filling them with a deep, unshakable faith in God, and a firm, active confidence in themselves; of conveying to mankind his message of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man; of initiating people to a life of Love, Service, and Worship; of founding a Holy Fellowship, a 'Fraternity of God-fearing Republicans'; of rescuing all whom he found lost in the wilderness of sin and error, and leading them, with the help of his ever-bright torch of Love and Truth, to the Blissful State where all sorrows cease, all flutterings of fear-laden hearts subside, where a steady, abiding joy and lasting peace come to fill the soul to its utmost depths, and where the happy soul ever feeds on the Sight of the Lord and rejoices in obeying His Will. Let us now try to picture him as he must have appeared to the fortunate people who had the privilege to see him with their eyes of flesh. Let us try to comprehend, of course in our limited way, the charms of his person which subdued kings, bigots, tyrants, cannibals, robbers, fanatics, scholars, ascetics, theologians, and all else on whom he fixed his gaze of love.

Sat Guru or True world-Teacher.

First and foremost he was a divinely anointed Master come to tell the world of the heavenly Father and lead them all to His Blissful Door. He ever dwelt in God, God ever dwelt in him and he showed Him to all who had the heart to desire and deserve.

He gave people a relish of the life of the spirit, and shaking them out of their mundane, soul-killing desires, passions, and pursuits, set them on the path leading to Life Everlasting. He was not to toil for a sect or section. He was for the whole world. Bhai Gurdas says that, on receiving orders from above, Guru Nanak set forth to correct and reform the whole race of man. Born in the Panjab, at a time when travelling had to be done mostly on foot and was fraught with great risks from wild beasts and robbers, he made extensive tours to such distant places as China, Burma, Ceylon, Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Russian Turkistan, and Afghanistan. He conveyed his message of Love, Service, and Worship, to all climes and peoples. Everywhere he succeeded in lighting the holy flame in the hearts of the people. Kings and Faqirs, robbers and saints, Sufis and Yogis, all bowed before him and each claimed him as his own. When he left them, they carved for themselves his image in the shrines of their devoted hearts and adored him with a true and steadfast love and devotion. They were helped in this worship of love by the Word of God which the Guru ever left with his disciples. They repeated his heavenly Songs of the Lord and daily and hourly held communion with him and God. He knit the soul of his disciples to the feet of the Lord. He delivered his message to all people in the language of their land and made them all members of his Holy Fellowship in which all were equal before God and man.

Guru Nanak is the Satguru or the True World Teacher in another sense, too. His teachings are not for a particular age. None of his thoughts or sayings can ever become obsolete. In his Songs and Discourses of the Lord there is nothing that has so far been denied or contradicted by the latest discoveries of scientific thought or that can likely be ever questioned. On the other hand, the progress of Science

in all its fields is only helping us to understand the better some passages in his writings which erstwhile seemed a bit obscure. He was a Satguru because he was the Voice of God; he said what the Lord bade him utter. He has declared in unequivocal words that his teacher was the Infinite, Absolute Lord Himself and that all that he said was in obedience to the orders received from Him. How could such sayings be meant for a particular age, land, or people? It is on that account that a popular song describes him thus, "Guru Nanak belongeth to all; everybody doth love and adore him."

Prophet and Philosopher.

In the person of Guru Nanak we meet with an unparalleled completeness of religious life. A little thought will tell us that religious life has two elements which are seldom found combined to any great extent in the same person. They seem to be mutually incompatible. "There is the ecstatic, fervid type which appears in the prophet who is appallingly aware of the importance of moral choice, and who is aware, with a vividness that is nearly always painful, of the presence of God and of His purity and holiness."* He finds himself face to face and in intimate contact with God. The world of sense disappears for him and he finds God whispering into his heart what he shall say and how he shall act. Then there is the philosophic type with the quiet and calm of a firmly established faith. In this the man is full of confidence and strength. He has placed his trust in the Almighty and is content to leave every issue in His hands. He trusts in God and does the right. Though these elements seem to be incompatible, yet they must both be present in some degree. It is essential for all truly religious life that man should feel full responsibility before God for all his thoughts, feelings, and acts. But it is equally essential that

* *The Faith and Modern Thought*, by William Temple, *pp.* 85-86.

he should be conscious of his impotence before the Almighty, of his life being completely in His hands.

When we look at the person of Guru Nanak, we find that in him these two incompatibles are completely reconciled and united. If we read his sublime poetry of Nature and man, we find how calm and observant he was of all that was passing round him in the animate and the inanimate world. He observes with rapture the dark clouds swarming thick in the rainy season; imagines the longings and the expectant joy of the whole vegetable and animal world at such a time; listens to the voice of the *Sarang* crying aloud for its drop of the rain water; watches the sun, the moon, the starry heavens, and the panorama of the whole universe dancing before the Throne of God; he realizes the pangs that a deserted wife feels in thinking of her spouse; he watches the birds as they fly across the heavens, the fish as they swim in water or writhe in agony when dragged out of it; the heron as it stands, like an anchorite, one-legged on the edge of a pool of water, apparently lost in thought or sleep, but in reality fully alert and on the look out for a tiny frog. His eye, ear, and heart are ever open to every impression of life around him. In all that he sees or feels he finds the hand and Will of his Lord. His confidence in His power is absolute. All happens as He wills. All act as He directs. None is outside the ambit of His Will. All this is a proof of his intense calm and absolute certainty. But there is the other side, too. We find him on several occasions becoming apparently lost to the world, diving deep into the ocean of ecstacy, and becoming almost incapacitated for physical exertion. He becomes beside himself. People consider him to be mad or possessed. Some, like Babar, unacquainted with this type of religious experience take him for dead. But in reality he is, at such moments, in direct union with

God. When he comes to himself we find him calmer, steadier, and more energetic than ever in the execution of his heaven-ordained task.

Thus we find that in the person of Guru Nanak the two types of religious experience were fully developed and intimately mixed. It was on that account that he could vanquish Yogis, Faqirs, Mullas, and Pandits. He was more than a match for them in philosophic thought and argument, and had the unique power of communicating to them his religious faith and fervour. They were proud of their learning and religious practices. They were thus thickening the wall of egoism between themselves and their indwelling Maker and Sustainer. The Divine Guest was within but they looked for him elsewhere, or perhaps, they forgot to look for Him anywhere. They did not think of preparing the chamber of their hearts for His reception. Guru Nanak threw a light on their inner selves, convinced them of their error, and showed them the Lord enthroned in and above all His creation including themselves. He taught them to worship Him through Love, Service, and Adoration. In that way could they meet and be one with Him.

Guru Nanak was thus a philosopher and prophet in one. His soul soared to celestial heights and brought from there armloads of ambrosia, the divine food of gods. This he distributed to all without distinction. He dived deep into the ocean of Ecstasy and then distributed to all, according to their need and capacity, the pearls of Eternal Joy, Peace, and Devotion, that he brought from there. He was a prophet who could quite effectively do what has baffled all other prophets the world over. He could explain his intense religious experience in philosophic thought and communicate it to others. He was a philosopher, but unlike all others; for he had not to painfully argue up to God, be convinced of His

existence, but be altogether incapable of finding and realizing Him. It has been said that all philosophy culminates with the Divine; only religious experience can give us God, and men who have the most vital communion with God are generally the least able to communicate their experience in the language of science or philosophy. But Guru Nanak's philosophy was the handmaiden of his prophetic vision and experience; both were fast, inseparable friends, ever at the beck and call of each other.

A Yogi and a Householder.

There is yet another aspect of his person in which we find an intimate union of two extremes which are generally regarded as wholly incompatible. The Guru was a perfect Yogi and a householder. For the whole of his life he toiled for the good of others. To sow, as widely as possible, the seed of *Name* was the ideal which he kept ever in view. He renounced his home and family because humanity called him to be its friend and saviour. He made a ready response. He distributed to the poor all that he had of the world's wealth and then started forth to give himself, his own self and spirit, to the whole human race. Like a Yogi he dwelt ever in union with the divine; renounced all attachments of the world; was ever evenly balanced amid all vicissitudes of life; never shrank from risks or sufferings; death had no terrors for him; he took upon himself the woes and sufferings of others; and, with an eye ever on the welfare of the world, he performed righteous action like a true Yogi. So strong was the urge in him for exertion in that direction that for over a quarter of a century he was ever on the wing, visiting different people and awakening them to a life of the spirit. This was Yoga in its most perfect form.

But his renunciation was not a forced one. He had not, as it were, to wrench himself away from his home and family; and then to subdue, by self-torture, his heart's leanings and

longings for the world. His renunciation sprang from his soul and his whole being made a ready response. There was no compulsion, no violence. This was his *Saihj Yoga*, the renunciation which had its spring in the equipoised heart and soul. In him there was a complete renunciation of even renunciation itself. He never thought of parading his having renounced the world. Moreover, when he was satisfied that his duty as a strolling Yogi' was done, he again returned to his home and family. He began to live as a 'house-holder-Yogi'. He had been preaching to the people that one should remain in the world, amid home and family, and yet ever maintain an attitude of constant detachment. He showed now how that ideal was to be practised. In the language of the world he was the father of two sons. But in himself he was the Father of his people of all lands and climes. He toiled and laboured for them all. He provided for their physical needs. He looked to their spiritual requirements. He fed, clothed, and nourished their bodies, minds, and souls. All who came to his door received what they needed. Such is the ideal that he prescribed for his Sikhs after demonstrating its practice in his own life.

Reformer.

He was a gifted, far-sighted reformer. He correctly diagnosed the malady that was eating into the vitals of human society, selected the right remedy, and applied it with zeal, energy, and perserverance. The reforms that he advocated and initiated remain to this day the ideal of many an advanced nation of the world. His solution of the social, political, and economic problems of human society stands justified even in the light of modern theories in Economics, Sociology and Politics. The organization of Society that he aimed at has been suitably described by Pincott as a "Fraternity of God-fearing Republicans". All are to live as equals. None is to assume airs of superiority on the score of birth, creed, sex, or

class. All should look to the good and welfare of each, and each should contribute his mite towards the good and prosperity of all. No class wars, no exploitation, no strikes, no lock-outs, no oppression or misrule, no foreign domination, would disfigure such a society. But, at the same time, it is not to be a group of athiests who have no hopes or fears beyond this life, for they believe in no other. God is to be a living reality for them; His fear is to check the evil propensities of their nature; His love is to inspire them to acts of service and usefulness. Self-effacement is to be practised in order to help the soul's progress towards a full realization of its unlimited powers. It is the lower self that has to be conquered and subdued in order to liberate the higher self for a flight to the bosom of the Lord. The hope of the joy of that union is to inspire each and all. There will then be no despots, no autocrats, no rulers of men; but humble, loving servants carrying on their duties, whatever they be, with the sole object of striving for the good and welfare of the human race and in the hope that this performance of their duties in the right spirit will help them in the progress of their souls. No nation will then try to conquer and govern another; no individual will try to impose his will on his fellow-men. All would live as equals helping each other towards the attainment of life's ideal. The colony of disciples that he found at Kartarpur was to be the model. We know that all, including even the Guru and his wife, engaged themselves in one form of labour or other in order to produce and supply the necessities of physical life. None considered himself to be a privileged one who could sit and muse and still claim a share in the wealth of the colony. All had to work for each, each had to toil for all. The Guru himself, the old Father of his people, aged above sixty by then, set the example by working at the plough, or at any other operation going on in the fields. No distinction of caste, race, or creed was observed.

in the field, in the temple, or in the common kitchen. All were brothers and equals. Such is the ideal organization which Guru Nanak designed for human society.

Poet.

Guru Nanak was a born poet. We find him at the tender age of nine or ten confounding his teachers by his poetic utterances. That gift, which he had from God, remained with him in full bloom to the end of his mission on this earth. In its power of appeal to the human heart; in its power to sway the whole being of man, to allay his fears, to soothe his pains, and to inspire in him faith, longing, hope, and confidence; in its width of outlook and sympathy; in its power to call up images of things visible and invisible, Guru Nanak's poetry remains without a parallel. He was a poet of man, Nature, and God. Thought of one led him on to the others. So he sang of them all in one breath. His pictures of scenes from Nature, drawn with a wonderful economy in the use of words, find their way direct to the core of human mind, heart, and soul But he does not allow us to remain for long engrossed in the objects of sense. With little strokes he lifts us up from Nature to her Lord, bids us look up and down, in and out, and enjoy the blissful sight of Him who is the Source and final Goal of all life. But he does not let us remain long even in that blissful contemplation. He makes us see our duty to our fellow beings and sends us speeding along on our different paths of Love and Service.

Musician.

Guru Nanak was also a musician. In fact he called himself again and again the Minstrel of God sent forth into the world for the purpose of singing to man the praises of the Lord and leading him to His ever-open arms. There was an irresistible power in his music. It charmed and tamed the wild, ferocious beasts; subdued raging kings and raving bigots and

tyrants; cooled the fires in the breasts of the proud and haughty; and made thugs and robbers forget their trade and hug his feet. Just recall how many were won for ever by his Songs. It was, in fact, his Songs of the Lord that made him truly the Voice of God. Up to this day, they are the wings on which the souls of his disciples fly Godwards. Whether when assembled in congregation or going about their duties in peace and war, the disciples of Guru Nanak sing his Songs, feed their spirit on them, and, invoking the spirit of their Master, seek to attain to that condition of blissful poise where all yearnings cease but healthy, useful activity regains fresh vigour and strength.

Patriot.

Guru Nanak was a true patriot. Indeed he was the first or almost the first in India to be inspired by that lofty sentiment. The sight and thought of his country's woes made his heart bleed. He was sore distressed at the tyranny and oppression that darkened the fair face of India. He sang of the people's ills, of his country's wrongs, of the crimes of kings who had become butchers of their peeple; he lifted his voice to the bosom of the Lord and Father of both the rulers and the ruled; he appealed to the dormant spiritual faculty of all and made them realize their rights and duties as human beings. All along in his life he made it a rule to meet and reform all who misused their position and power. He called upon his countrymen to be up and doing in the cause of their country's freedom, to purify and nerve themselves up in order to be worthy champions of their country's cause. For thus preaching his doctrines of liberty, equality, and fraternity, for his untiring efforts to establish an association of God-fearing Republicans, he was arrested by the agents of Sikandar Lodi, the Emperor of Delhi. His teachings were considered to be dangerous to the despotic rule of the Emperor. But the arrest or the subsequent experiences

did not daunt him in the least. He met the Emperor, delivered to him his message of the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man, woke him to a realization of his duties towards his subjects, and obtained from him a promise to be a just and merciful ruler.

Finding what havoc the victorious armies of Babar were working in the land, Guru Nanak's patriotic heart, sent forth a bitter complaint to the Lord against his seeming partiality. Thus sang he :

"To-day Khurasan Thou hast made Thine own,
Why not India, O Lord ?
Why hast Thou breathed a dreadful curse on this land and terrified her with Thy retribution ?
Thou wilt not let Thyself look responsible for our ills,
Hence hast Thou sent us Ruin and Death in a Mughal's guise ,
But why O Lord, why ? ...."

The whole of this moving Song and many others that he sang *extempore* on seeing the misery of his countrymen and countrywomen are the sublimest pieces of patriotic poetry that has ever been written. The patriotic part played by the Guru at the time of Babar's invasion has been noticed in the body of the book. Not only did he voluntarily share the sufferings of his compatriots but he also interceded successfully on behalf of those of his country's sons and daughters who had been taken by the victorious invaders, reformed the dreaded Mughal, and made him one of the kindest rulers.

We can well imagine what he would have done if he had an army at his back. But the time was not yet ripe for making an armed effort towards the political and economic emancipation of his country. He did the best that was possible under the circumstances. He began to rouse in the downtrodden people a longing for union, liberty, and equality. In order that they might be ready to win their rights in due course and to make the requisite sacrifices for that coveted consummation, he sought to raise and purify their character

and produce in them a strong sense of honour and self-respect. He knew that no people with a lofty character, ready for any sacrifice, and inspired with a longing to be united and free, could for long be held in chains and subjection. Knowing that to mould the character of those who had fallen so low in the course of centuries of despotic rule of foreigners it was essential to proclaim the message and hold up the ideal for some generations at least, he ordained a succession of Gurus till the work could be entrusted to the people themselves.

Cosmopolitan.

But the love for his land, deep and genuine as it was, did not exhaust or bound his spacious heart. As a matter of fact, his patriotism sprang from the supreme love of humanity that filled his heart through and through. He was a citizen of the world. Finding how people in all lands were groaning under the ills wrought by their fellowmen in power, he girded up his loins to carry, as far as he could, his message of Love Service, and Worship, of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Everywhere he taught all sections of the people to live and love as brothers. Just think of the countries that he visited—Burma, Ceylon, Tibet, China, Russian Turkistan, Arabia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Turkey, Iraq, and Persia, besides the whole of India. He might have gone farther for aught we know. His heart was wide as humanity. His love embraced all living beings. For him the love of his own country and countrymen did not, as a necessary corollary, involve the hatred of other lands and peoples. He wanted all peoples to grow up together in deep love of God and man, and all work for bringing the Kingdom of God on this earth.

His Path of Love.

He realized full well that the path of love to which he invited all people was not to be chosen light-heartedly. It was narrower than a hair and sharper than the sharpest steel. It involved great risks and difficulties. Hence it was

that, after rousing in the hearts of his listeners a desire to set forth on the path of love that he smilingly pointed out to them as leading to the achievement of the goal and purpose of human life and helping men to approach the bosom of the Lord, Guru Nanak always warned the enthusiasts and bade them pause and ponder over the magnitude of the undertaking. He told them :—

" Desirest thou this game of Love to play ?
Put thy head on thy palm.
With a heart resolute and calm,
Steadily follow me on this way.
This path of love if thou wouldst tread,
Be ready, O dear,
Sans wavering or fear,
In perfect joy to lay down thy head "

History stands witness to the fact how marvellously the Sikhs of Guru Nanak imbibed, in due course, the spirit of his teachings.*

Brave and Fearless.

Guru Nanak was fearless and brave. Having chosen his path and undertaken his heaven-ordained task, he shrank from no toil or risk that he had to encounter in the execution of his duty. If his duty called him to the snows of the Himalayas or the sands of Arabia and Egypt, to the palaces of kings or the huts of castaway beggars, to the camps of dreaded autocrats, bigots, and tyrants, or the ambushes of robbers and cannibals and slave dealers, he paused not even for a moment to consider the possible consequences to himself of his adventures. He did his duty and joyfully bore on his person all toils and hardships that it entailed. He carried his life on his palm. He was not afraid of death. Rather, he banished the fear of death from the hearts of his disciples. " To die," said he, " is the privilege of the brave, provided they die in an

* Vide *Life of Guru Gobind Singh* by the writer.

approved cause." What fear could they feel who regarded death as a privilege?

Think of the times in which he lived and worked. On the throne of Delhi was that 'ferocious bigot' who beheaded learned persons like Pandit Boodhan for the mere offence of maintaining that any other religion could be quite as good as Islam. On the other hand, the Brahmins had so greatly tightened the caste restrictions that even the slightest departure was punished with ex-communication. Guru Nanak knew the risks which he ran in preaching his message of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, in exhorting people to be free and make others free. We know that he had to face active opposition. He was called *Kurahia* or the Misled by the caste-Hindus. He was arrested for preaching a doctrine which was likely to be dangerous to the peace and tranquillity of the country.* But nothing daunted, he zealously carried his message not only through the length and breadth of India but also to distant places like China, Egypt, Turkey, Ceylon, Russia.

Humble and Sweet.

But all the same he was full of humility and sweetness. Indeed he declared that sweetness and humility form the essence of all virtues and good qualities. Throughout his life on this earth we never find him ill-treating, in speech or conduct, even the worst of criminals whom he met and reformed. His sweet smile of love penetrated to the depths of even the foulest hearts and lighted the holy flame therein. We never find him uttering curses. He loved the sinners and wrong-doers, and sweetly dragged them out of the mire of sin and evil. He was Humility itself. In his Songs and discourses he has nowhere arrogantly declared himself to be the only Prophet or Son of God. He calls himself the lowly Minstrel of God, the slave of His slaves,

the lowly, the insignificant. He never said that the path advocated by him was the only one founded on Truth and leading to God. He never said, " Believe all that I say or be doomed to burn in the eternal fires of Hell. All who believe in me will go to Paradise and all others to Hell. I shall be standing by the throne of God on the Day of Judgement and shall intercede on behalf of and admit into Paradise all who have exclusive faith in me. " No. He never talked in that vein. He simply said, " In myself I am nothing. I am but a humble instrument of Divine Will. I say what he bids me say. No set of people are specially favoured of God. No intercessor can help you to win Paradise. There is no magic word which can shut the door of Hell and open that of Heaven. By your actions alone can you be saved or doomed. So take good heed of what you think, feel, or do. The Guru can only set you on the right path and help you to keep steady. But you have to walk on with your own force of will and character. Your belonging to this or that persuasion or creed carries little weight. Your character and conduct mean everything. So trust in God and do the right. "

He taught his disciples to be as tolerant, humble, and sweet-tempered, as he was. He forbade them to force their faith on others by threat or violence. Even like him they were to draw and win others by the beauty and sweetness of their lives and persons. They were to hate or scorn no man and return good for evil. His was a message of love and toleration. He did not preach or teach bigotry or fanaticism.

Man of Will and Action.

He was a man of will and action. Religion with him did not consist in sitting idle and repeating a certain text or formula. It called him forth to be ever engaged in acts of love and service. The sight of suffering and high-handedness does not leave him cold ; does not make him

shiver and shrivel and withdraw into the regions of his own soul. It calls him forth to act and suffer in behalf of the unfortunate sufferers. He could penetrate to the camp of the dreaded Mughal, Babar, share the sufferings of his innocent, unfortunate brothers and sisters, and ultimately win them their freedom. "Good actions alone will endure, my soul," was ever the burthen of his exhortations no less to himself than to his listeners. He never brooded but acted. The strength of his will and his powers of action and endurance are marvellous indeed. In response to the call of God and humanity, and in spite of all the efforts of his parents and relatives, and unmindful of the grave risks that the task clearly involved, he left the restful life of his home and for nearly a quarter of a century went about from land to land carrying his message to peoples of all lands. He travelled over hills and mountains, through deserts and jungles, through lands of cannibals and slave dealers ; he met bigots and tyrants ; and conquered them all by his sweet, strong will and daring. No founder of any religion travelled so far and wide or took such great pains to convey his message to so many peoples. When we remember that all his travels were done in the first quarter of the sixteenth century when means of communication were so little developed, and when religious bigotry and fanaticism raged so hot, we can well realize how supreme must have been the energy, courage, and will which inspired Guru Nanak.

Versatile Linguist.

Another thing which strikes one in the person of Guru Nanak is his marvellous versatility in picking up readily and well so many different languages. We know what countries he visited. We also know that in all of them he held intimate divine discourses with the people. He was not travelling for pleasure or diversion. He was not a mute

observer of men, manners, and things. He had a message to deliver. He had to make his way to the hearts of the people and win them over to his path of Love, Service, and Worship. This he could not have accomplished in the manner and degree that he actually did if he could not have entered into the thoughts, hopes, and fears of the people, and addressed them words of faith, cheer, courage, and consolation in their own mother tongue.

Witty and Humorous.

There was yet another remarkable trait in his person. That was his ready wit and ever-flowing humour. He could hold himself aloof from the whirlpool of the world's activities for a while and discern the ridiculous in them. He made an extensive use of this faculty in his work. Many examples will readily suggest themselves to the reader where Guru Nanak, by a witty retort or practice, drew people's attention forcibly to the ridiculousness of their beliefs and conduct, and convinced them of their folly. Throwing of water to the west at Hardwar, lying with his feet to the Ka'aba, cooking meat on the occasion of solar eclipse at Kurkshetar, sitting aloof from the Arti at Jagannath and several other episodes are illustrations of his faculty for wit and humour.

These, in brief, are a few glimpses of the person of Guru Nanak. Guru Arjan Dev called him "the image of God, nay God Himself". To know him fully one should be as great as he. The features of his mortal countenance are unknown to men; the painter who shows him to our eyes can do so but imperfectly. No one shall know the sound of his voice which yet dominates the ages, nor the brilliance of his eyes by which the infinite goodness has shone into our shades; nor hear the exquisite music of his rebeck which melted the stony hearts of all who had the good luck to listen to the heavenly strains which his divine hands played

on it. But he has left to us his Word of God which can help us to reconstruct his spiritual physiognomy and his life. He has laid bare his heart in those sacred pages and has declared with a clarion call that those who would converse with him may study his Word of God with a heart full of faith and hope. More. He has left us his image, the sign of his power and love, in all those who live with his spirit, burn with his love, suffer with his pity, and march with his hope. In them he lives again. Let us all pray that he may teach us to be worthy of being called his, to live and love as he wished us to do and showed us how to do.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE RELIGION OF GURU NANAK

God, man, and the universe are the three main themes of the teachings of all great religions. All religions seek to enlighten man about his right attitude, and hence his duty, towards God, his fellowmen, the things of the world, and his own self—soul and body alike. We shall try to give here a brief outline of Guru Nanak's teachings on these essential points.

God.

There have ever been two conflicting and opposite conceptions about God. He has been regarded by some as Immanent and by others as Transcendent. Pure immanence, or Pantheism as it is also called, believed that God is present *equally* in every part of His creation, or, as a typical saying puts it, " The learned behold God alike in the reverend Brahmin, in the ox and the elephant, in the dog and in him who eateth the flesh of dogs " No degrees, no difference. This view cuts at the root of all morality. It leaves no room for progress and aspiration. In it there is no place or justification for prohibiting and condemning even the vilest acts. Morality and, the highest teachings of all religions become meaningless. There is no God in any way distinguishable from the created things. There is neither good nor bad, neither better nor worse , for everything, just as it exists, is divine and therefore, equally perfect. Who should presume to improve what in its very nature is as perfect as God Himself? And what exertion need be made for self-improvement for every man and beast is divine ?

In the opposite view God is regarded as the Omnipotent, creating and destroying the world at His sweet Will ; enthroned above the heavens ; Inaccessible and Incomprehensible ; the Sole Agent in everything that happens ; the Infinite and Absolute who rules the world like an All-powerful Despot unaffected by the wishes, thoughts, and prayers of men. Such a view of God leaves us necessarily cold. We feel that we can enter into no relation with God ; that no amount of effort on our part to improve our destiny can be fruitful, for God does all as it pleases Him; that no amount of exertion or prayer can move Him to alter His arbitrarily determined course of things. Such a Being can fill us with dread and despair but not with love, faith, and hope. These saving emotions are inhibited completely. This conception leaves us with a " mighty' darkness filling the seat of power ". We can have nothing to do with Him Ultimately this view leads one to a practical denial of the divine. Knowing that all his acts and their fruits and consequences are fore-ordained by an arbitrary will, without any regard to his feelings, thoughts, and efforts, man ceases to have any interest in his destiny and is tempted to give reins to his desires, appetites, and passions. " Eat, drink, and be merry while you may " becomes his watchword. So this view of God, too, leaves little room for man to make efforts towards bettering himself, his future state, and the world around him. If purely immanental view of divine makes all efforts unnecessary as it involves the unqualified acceptance of everything just as it is, the transcendental view rules out all such efforts as utterly futile for no betterment, howsoever necessary, is at all possible.

The question of immanence and transcendence is thus a fundamental issue in all religious philosophy. Guru Nanak has not shirked or evaded it. In all his teachings he has persistently attempted and effected a wholesome reconciliation

of these two opposite views of divine nature and action. Thus, in the words which contain the central formula, the *Mul Mantra*, of his religion, Guru Nanak gives us a few glimpses of the Lord as under :—

> " The One Supreme Being; the Eternal, the Creater Who pervadeth and sustaineth all His creation ; free from fear and enmity ; Timeless ; not subject to birth and death ; Self-subsistent, and the Enlightener ; to be known and realized by the grace of Guru. "

God is thus not the great First Cause who created the world once upon a time, but the indwelling Spirit that creates and sustains the universe each moment of its existence. He is not equated with His creation ; He transcends it ; but He is also present in every little part of it at all times. This immanence of the transcendence, this presence of the Infinite in our finite lives, is emphasised again and again by the Guru. For example:—

" Thou alone hast created the earth and heavens,
And Thou alone art sustaining them at all times
Wonderful art Thou O Lord,
O Supreme Spirit pervading all Nature !
Infinite art Thou and inscrutable is Thy action.
Thou dwellest in all creatures and all creatures dwell in Thee,
Thou fillest the heavens and earths by an art that none is able to apprehend." (*Asa di Var*)

" He who creates the universe and sustains it for aye
Is to be known in and through His creation.
Don't look for the True One in zones far away,
In every heart He dwells as the Spark Divine,
Look for Him and find Him there." (*Wadhans*)

" Thou hast created the world,
Thou dost ever stand in the midst of Thy works
But, all the same, art ever aloof and away from them all."
(*Var Suhi Slok*)

" The Infinite, he Absolute, aloof from all,
Timeless, Unborn, confined to no race or creed,
Unpolluted, Inaccessible, and beyond comprehension,
Having no form, no features, no shape,
Such is He.

But an earnest, persistent search reveals Him indwelling in every heart." (*Bilawal*)

" Over land and sea, unseen by all, He acts
And through the Word of God proclaimed by the Guru is He seen and realized." (*Sorath*)

"He is the life of all life, and inspires, enlightens, and sustains every heart," but He is also the " One of whom no effort of human intellect can form an adequate conception". " He rules the universe by His Supreme Will from which none is exempt." All creatures simply carry out His Will but are, at the same time, responsible for their acts as agents having a good deal of choice. He is the Supreme ruler of the world but He listens to the prayers of the devout and faithful. He protects them with His own hands. Nay, He even becomes a willing servant of His servants and runs about in execution of their wishes. But, of course, such servants as come to command their Master cease to have any wishes or will apart from the Will of their Lord.

Transcendence thus does not mean aloofness or remoteness. God as transcendent is the perfect One who is the ideal of all human endeavour. Man is not divine as he is, but he is capable of becoming divine. Indeed to be one with God is the goal of the soul's journey through the cycle of births and deaths. Man has to become like God. If He were only far away, outside of us, we could hope to see Him as we see other objects all round us. But He is present also in the innermost depths of our own hearts. So we cannot see Him with the eyes of flesh as they are. By the grace of Guru, the divinely gifted teacher, we gradually come to know Him ; He gradually discloses His features to us as we become able to apprehend the vision. This experience gives us contact with God ; not an understanding of God but living in vital union with Him is what we get. In the end we come to see Him face to face as surely as we see the material world around us. We find Him in every object, we recognise Him as the

inspiring Spirit to whom all progress is due. But the immanent God is thus always infinitely transcendent. He is ever our ideal. We are ever reaching out to Him.

This need not confound us. We have, in our own human nature, a reflection of this immanence of the transcendent, the presence of the Infinite in the finite world. Who does not feel at times that there are in him, as it were, two selves which are ever at variance if not at war with each other—the higher and the lower selves? Who has not often felt the "divine discontent" which is the root of all progress? In so far as we give reins to our lower self and make it the judge and master of all our thoughts, feelings, and efforts, do we get away from Him. As the wall of the lower self thickens, it conceals Him more and more from our view and shuts out His light from our life. He is then remote and aloof from us. We are then like a child who, in the midst of a big crowd, gets separated from his father. For a time we might feel engrossed in the enticing things before our eyes like the child in a fair; but the moment we become conscious of the absence of the guiding arm, the loving face of the one who has left us, we become bewildered and confused. If, however, we hearken to the voice of the higher self, if we make our higher self the master in the household of our personality, if we try to reach out to Him, we find that the wall which had shut out the light of God from us is gradually wearing out and falling away. In time we come to see Him as if with our eyes of flesh dwelling in every heart including our own. We find Him filllng all space. We discern Him in ourselves and ourselves in Him. In time a true servant of God becomes indistinguishable from the object of his worship and devotion; but he never poses to be God. Having infinite power, he is powerless; possessed of surpassing honour and dignity, he is the humblest man on earth.

Duty to God.

This then is Guru Nanak's conception of God and His creation. Man's duty towards Him springs naturally from this view of God. Man has to develop the divine in him so as to become like God, be one with Him. The human life is an opportunity given him for the attainment of that blissful union. In order to become God-like he has to develop in his being a love for Him. Man's daily experience tells him how to achieve this. How do we come to love a valued friend but by a constant thinking upon his good and noble qualities which endear him to us? We love him for his virtues. Similar is the way suggested by the Guru for the development of a love for God. Meditation on His divine personal attributes of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth, rouses in the heart a desire to acquire those cherished virtues in our own persons. This attitude places us in harmony with the unseen divine forces working in the universe. As we exert to realize in our actual daily life the divine virtues which are thus the objects of our constant meditations, we come to love Him who is the embodiment of all these charming and coveted qualities.

But, caught in the whirlpool of passions and low desires, borne helplessly along on the tide of world's allurements and attachments, man hearkens not to the voice of God as He speaks through His dear ones. The wall of ego gets thicker and thicker, shutting out, more and more, divine light from his being, with every victory of the lower self. A time comes, some catastrophe, some sublime contact with the Almighty, and the man is filled with fear for his safety. The world then appears hollow at the core, unreal and unreliable. All those in whom he had been placing his hope and confidence seem to be but bits of lifeless clay and fall away from him. He finds himself utterly powerless and completely in the hands of a mysterious, Supreme power like kneaded clay

in the potter's hands. Blessed is he who gets such an experience. This fear is the beginning of wisdom, for it rescues man from the clutches of his lower self and makes him hearken to the voice of his higher self and look up to his Maker and Sustainer. When he finds in Him all those powers and qualities which he lacks and which he needs most in his journey through life, he begins to love and adore Him. Indeed Guru Nanak says again and again that without the fear of the Lord love for Him cannot grow in the heart of man. Be it remembered, however, that this fear is not a deadening, benumbing, repelling sentiment; but one which fills man with a longing to run to the bosom of the Queller of all fear, the Almighty Father who alone can give him every protection. Reverence and awe are the chief components of this fear. They lead to love. Ultimately all fear disappears. Love becomes all in all. Love fills him through and through. All evil then departs from his heart. No evil can now touch him. By meditating on *Hari*, by living in vital union with Him, the devotee becomes *Hari*—no difference, no distance, and no separateness are left. The two become one. Man becomes as powerful as God but also as full of divine pity, sympathy, love, and compassion, as the Beloved Lord. In fact, he thinks not of the power that his union with the Almighty gives him, but only of the duty of love towards his fellow-creatures which that union entails. He can sin no more. For what is sin? "It is the self-assertion, either of one part of a man's nature against the whole, or of a member of the human family against the welfare of that family and the will of its Father." But, by a revelation of a love which is so intense that no heart which beats can remain indifferent to it, this self-will is overcome and transformed into conformity with the divine Will. Every deed then becomes a song of praise and every thought

a movement of love towards Him by whom and in whom all things and beings subsist.

It might be added here that Gurū Nanak's ideal for the soul of man is not a condition of nothingness or *Nirvana*, nor a seat in paradise where there would be an abundance of means for sensual enjoyment, but a union—a living, vital union—with the ever active Creator and Sustainer of the universe. As he says in one of his Songs of the Lord, "What is paradise or salvation to a man who is athirst for the Lord Himself ?" His love for the Lord will be satisfied with no such toys or lifeless rest. The Lord Himself in all His glory and power is his ideal.

Need of a Guru.

But this love for the Lord cannot be had altogether at will. No amount of reasoning and argument can establish in us that vital contact with the divine which is the mainspring of this love. Nor can all have revelation direct from God. But if a man desires to have a vision of the Eternal Love and Power rightly and sweetly ordering all things, he must enter into the fruits of the labour of those who have striven and suffered and prayed, and received the answering light from heaven, the great ones who ever dwelt in God, in whom God ever dwelt, and through whom He worked. For the rousing of that love for the Lord man needs both the Grace of God and the help and guidance of divinely gifted teacher. Guru Nanak does not believe in a pivotal individual on whom can turn the salvation of mankind, or because of whose sacrifice, once upon a time, all who put their faith in him are to be saved from the consequences of their actions, or who can intercede with the Great Judge in favour of his followers and get them the pleasures of paradise in spite of their sins. He says again and again that human conduct in its widest sense, including thoughts and desires not necessarily externalised in action,

will be followed by its natural and inevitable results, not only in this life but also in the life to come. At the same time, he emphasises the great part which the Guru can play in moulding and transforming this conduct and rescuing the character of man from downward tendencies born of his conduct in the past. The Guru awakens the soul in man, rouses him to a living consciousness of his higher needs, and sets him on the path of Love, Service, and Devotion. He shows the Light of the Lord to the seeker, and bids him go ahead on his journey to His Door. The Guru washes away the devout seeker's sins in the sense that he eradicates from his character all tendencies born of those sins. He gives him even a glimpse of the Lord and helps him to establish a vital union with Him. But self-help is to be the chief, though not the only, mainstay of a seeker after the Lord. Once well on the right path, his progress on it will depend on his own attitude and efforts, guided by the Word of God as given to him by the Guru.

In brief, man's duty towards God consists in honouring and loving Him ; in so moulding his character as to make his thoughts, feelings, and efforts, conform to His Will ; in worshipping Him with zeal and devotion. True worship, it may be added, will always have two sides, a practical side, in our conduct, for our whole life will become an act of worship ; but worship must also have its own life in adoration, prayer, and communion. Hence a true worshipper of God can never sit idle or harbour thoughts of pride, hate, and arrogance. Love fills him through and through. The whole universe appears to him to be a part of himself.

Duty to Neighbours.

If a man has, by his earnest efforts guided and assisted by the Guru, succeeded in placing himself in the right attitude towards God, he will have no doubts about his duty to his fellow-beings. He will love them as his own self,

He cannot even think of tyrannizing over or exploiting his fellowmen. His joy will consist in lovingly helping them all in the path of progress. "Those who are filled with the love of the Lord love everybody."* If a man becomes fully convinced of the presence of God in, around, and beyond every object that He has created, he ceases to sin against His Law ; he can no longer do evil to any of his fellow-beings ; for how can he be sincere with God and a hypocrite with men ? With most people God is not a living God. He is a pale shadow, floating like an almost extinct memory in the little of religious sentiment that is yet left in them. This shadow has eyes but sees not, ears but hears not. They do not hesitate to commit their sins in his presence, when the presence of man would restrain them. Their God is less than a man. Their religion is but a cloak for their evil, vicious, degenerate selves. They put it on when they are about to plot and act against God and man. They hope to wipe away their sins by a prayer or two at home, an offering at a temple, or a pilgrimage to some holy place. Far, very far indeed, is true religious sentiment from their hearts. A true devotee of God can never let himself fall so low. He adores and worships the Father and loves and serves his fellowmen. He will think neither of deserting his family, renouncing the world, and thereby becoming a burden on society, nor of aggrandising himself and his own at the expense of others. He will remain in the world, derive nourishment from it, do his duty in and towards it, but keep his thoughts fixed on Cod. He will live a balanced life free from any excess of one sort or another. He will find God in the world and the world in God. He will lovingly serve his fellow-beings for he will thereby be loving and serving his Father. He will never think of forcing his convictions on others. He will not tyrannize but love and serve. As the

*Guru Nanak in *Wadhans Rag*.

Guru says, " If we practise active service in the world, then alone shall be find a place in the Presence of the Lord."* " No amount of idle talk can lead us to God ; it is only by the practice of righteousness that we can win our salvation."†

Duty to Self.

Unlike the materialists, who consider matter to be the only reality, Guru Nanak did not regard man's self to consist of the body alone ; unlike the ascetics, he did not regard the body to be only an encumbrance which has to be subdued, tortured, and reduced, so as to liberate, for upward flight, the human soul ; unlike the early evolutionists, he did not regard the human intelligence to be a product of mere chance ; he did not agree with the Pantheists that man with all his propensities towards evil is intrinsically divine and therefore perfect as God. He did not regard the world with all its means of good, pleasure, and joy, to be only a delusion and a snare to be avoided and shunned ; but he did not, at the same time, take it as the be all and end all of all human life. He regarded the human soul to be a spark from the Spirit of God, capable of becoming one with Him. He regarded the body as the servant of the soul designed to help its progress towards God. The world with its manifold charms and snares, pleasures and pains, is the field for the soul's battle with all downward tendencies, the stone by stepping on which the soul can reach up to God.

Hence man's duty towards his self consists in his duty to his body, heart, mind, soul, and the world. Considering the body to be a necessary helper of the soul in its journey towards the great Ideal, the disciple has to tend and guard it ; but knowing also that it might become a real encumbrance, if it comes to monopolise his attention, he does not pamper it. He treats it as a servant of the soul. He also knows that ignorance is the root of error and sin, hence he tries to

* *Sri Rag.* † *Majh Rag.*

cultivate every means of extending knowledge. But this mental culture does not absorb him altogether. He keeps ever conscious of the fact that this knowledge is to help his progress towards God. Hence he uses his knowledge for the discrimination of right from wrong, and ever does the right in the light of his knowledge. All his knowledge has its root in faith and fructifies in Love and service. He knows that man's actions are performed in accordance with his nature or self; reason and intellect being used afterwards to justify the course chosen by the self of man. He has, therefore, to conquer this self; not by torturing the body or by practising austerities, but by hearkening to the Word of God and getting rid of all lower, downward tendencies. He knows that the spirit in him is his real, ultimate self and he feeds his spirit on the Word of God and develops it by a life of Love, Service, and Worship. He gets ready the chamber of his heart for the Divine Guest. He regards the world around him as God's creation and His dwelling place. Hence he does his duty to the world by helping it onwards on the path towards its Eternal Ideal. In this way he lives a life of poise and balance, of service and activity, of devotion and worship, of love and usefulness. Ultimately he comes to live in God and God comes to live in him.

Summary.

In brief, Guru Nanak preached the religion of work, prayer, and adoration. He told men of their duty to God, to their brethren, and to their own selves—body and soul alike. He did not indulge in theological quibbles. He dealt with practical life. His creed may be briefly stated as follows:—

Man contains in himself the divine spark which is apt to get walled round by an exclusive attachment to a life of mundane joys and pleasures. Such a course of life develops man's ego and renders him blind to his higher needs and capabilities. The thick and ever thickening wall of this ego

can be torn asunder only by hearkening to the Guru's word which will teach him to look upon God as the Great Ruler of man's destinies. This turning of man's eyes towards God shatters his pride in himself. He longs to rise and be one with his Maker. He then joyfully acts on the Guru's advice. He lovingly does his duty to God, his brethren, and his own self. He then realises that in order to be accepted of God he must joyfully and lovingly walk through life as a traveller bound for the Eternal Home. He knows that his duty to God consists in loving and honouring Him, in making Him the ideal for the soul's career in this life's journey. His duty to his neighbours consists in regarding them as his brethren in spirit born of the same Father, and helping them in the path of progress towards the Greal Ideal. His duty to his own self consists in tending and guarding the body, cultivating every means of extending knowledge, seeking a full view of Truth by hearkening to and practising the Word of God, doing ever the right in accordance with his knowledge and cultivating communion with the Supreme Spirit who is the Source and the ultimate Home of the human spirit. While doing this in perfect faith, he is ever to remember that the love of the Lord cannot be had by man's exertions alone. He ever prays to the Benevolent Father for Grace and Enlightenment and humbly carries on his efforts towards pleasing Him. This attitude saves him from pride which is the cause of man's fall all round. Thus humbly, with his eyes fixed on the Great Ideal, does he travel through the world as a servant and lover of God and man. In the end he gains acceptance at His door and exerts himself all the more in helping others towards the Goal.

APPENDIX A

In these days the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev is celebrated on the full moon day of the Katak (October-November). But this is not the correct day or month of the Guru's birth, which occurred in the early morning of the third day of the light half of the month of Baisakh in the Samvat year 1526 or on the 15th April 1469 A. D.

Reasons in favour of the latter date may be briefly stated as follows :—

(1) In all the earlier records about the Guru the above-said date of Baisakh is given as the date of the Guru's birth. These records are :—(a) The old or *Puratan Janamsakhi* which was originally written in the times of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru. This is the oldest and the most trustworthy detailed record of Guru Nanak's life. (b) The *Janamsakhi* by Bhai Mani Singh. This was written in the early thirtees of the eighteenth century A. D. (c) the *Mahma Prakash* by Bawa Sarup Das Bhalla, written in Samvat year 1833 or 1776 A. D.

It has to be remembered that, according to the testimony of Bhai Gurdas who was initiated by Guru Amardas and wrote the Guru Granth Sahib at Guru Arjan's dictation, the birth anniversaries of the Gurus were celebrated by the Sikhs of those early days. The writer of *Puratan Janamsakhi*, who wrote in the times of the sixth Guru, could not have been ignorant of the date and month when Guru Nanak's birth anniversary was then celebrated. He could not have written Baisakh if the celebrations had been taking place in Katak. Similarly, Bhai Mani Singh, one of the closest associates and

the devoutest Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh, and the first Granthi of the Temple of God at Amritsar, could not have written Baisakh if the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak had been believed and celebrated as falling in the month of Katak. The fact that Bawa Sarup Das, writing in 1776 A. D., gives Baisakh as the natal month of the Guru also shows that till then the month of Katak had not been associated with the Guru's birth.

(2) The month of Katak was given currency as the Guru's natal month by Bidhi Chand, a descendant of Hindal. "This man had taken into himself a Muhammadan woman bound to him by ties of love rather than those of marriage,. His followers abandoned him. On that he devised a religion of his own and compiled a Granth and a Janamsakhi for this purpose." In the Janamsakhi he tried his worst to defame Guru Nanak, to justify himself by attributing his own failings and vices to the Guru, and lower him in the public estimation His substitution of the month of Katak in place of Baisakh was done with the last object. According to a superstition, which exists to this day, a child born in Katak was considered to be unlucky and harmful.

After this Janamsakhi was written the Hindalis used all their influence to destroy all the older accounts of Guru Nanak's life. We also know that Sikh manuscripts, which were generally preserved in Sikh temples, were hunted and ruthlessly destroyed during the persecution of the Sikh faith by the Muhammadan authorities. Only copies in the possession of private individuals living away from the field of persecution could escape the rage of the Muhammadans. This explains why the Hindali Janamsakhi came to be the only account of the Guru's life that was widely known. But earlier and more trustworthy accounts have since been found.

(3) Though Bidhi Chand distorted the accounts of the Guru's life as early as 1640 A. D., yet the birth anniversary

of the Guru continued to be celebrated at Nankana Sahib in the month of Baisakh up to the Samvat year 1872.

(4) All accounts of the Guru's life, even those which place the Guru's birth in Katak, are agreed that Guru Nanak lived in this world for seventy years, five months, and seven days, and that his death occurred in the month of Assu, Samvat 1596. From the full moon day in Katak 1526 to Assu 1596, the period comes to less than seventy years. On the other hand, if the date of birth be taken as the third day of the light half of Baisakh 1526, and the date of ascension as the tenth day of the light half of Assu, 1596, the period of the Guru's life comes to exactly seventy years, five months, and seven days.

All these considerations have made us take Baisakh as the natal month of Guru Nanak. Macauliffe also adopted the same date as given here. His discussion of the point is very instructive and has been drawn upon in the above.

APPENDIX B

ON MIRACLES

We find that all great religious leaders all the world over are reputed to have possessed extranormal spiritual powers by virtue of which they could perform acts which the common people could neither repeat nor explain. These inexplicable supernormal activities of these towering human personalities filled the common folk with wonder and hence came to be known as *miraculae* or miracles.*

Since long there have been two views or rather explanations about miracles. One, chiefly current in the West and associated with Christianity, regards miracles as supernatural phenomena due to Divine interference in the course of nature. 'This infraction of laws of nature' is resorted to by God in order to give evidence of His existence and omnipotence ; to attest Divine revelation which, by its very nature, is beyond human reason and understanding and must be accepted at par on the strength of the accompanying miracles ; and to certify that the great one who apparently performs these miracles or on whose account the laws of nature are for a time suspended is God's own special messenger.

It is not within the scope of this essay to describe how, by an undue insistence on an attempted explanation of certain spiritual extranormal phenomena associated with the name of Christ, miracles came to be defined in the west as 'infractions of laws due to Divine interference'. It might be said at once that this definition at first "adopted by Hume's school in the last century has been tacitly accepted by the Church and has

* Miracle is derived from *miurs* meaning wonderful.

now filtered down to the general public, by whom it is still believed to be correct, and who, therefore, are unable to believe in miracle at all, or even to assent to it, save by referring it to distant time and making Divine 'interference' an article of faith." * So much so that reputed Christian divines came to regard miracles, in the sense of infractions of law due to Divine interference, as a vital element of Christianity. "If miracles be incredible," declared one of them, "Christianity is false."†

The other view about miracles, generally current in the East and now coming to be gradually adopted in the West as well, is that they are the manifestations of special spiritual powers which are, in varying degrees, latent in every man and are capable of development by discipline, practice, and cultivation. It is also believed that some are, from their very birth, endowed with highly developed spiritual powers so that they can perform acts which to ordinary people appear wonderful, extranormal, or even superhuman or supernatural But there is nothing superhuman or supernatural in them. They are perfectly natural wonders of highly developed human personality. A miracle is really " the physical action of an unseen intelligent agent producing results to which known laws are inadequate."‡

Having stated the two views regarding miracles, it may be said at once that miracles in the first sense are not associated with the name of Guru Nanak or his successors, and constitute no element or basis of their message. Guru Nanak's appeal was always addressed to the heart and mind of his listeners. He convinced them of the truth and soundness of his message not by miraculous evidence but by his sweet humility, profound reasonableness, soul-stirring Songs and discourses, and, above all, by his personal example.

* V. C. Desertis, *Psychic Philosophy*, page 31.

† Dr. Farrar, *The Witness of History to Christ*, quoted in *Supernatural Religion*, page 7.

‡ V. C. Desertis, *op cit* page 32.

He won people because of the fervent hope, faith, and joy that he roused in the hearts of all who had the good luck to meet him. All the same, Guru Nanak's was a fully endowed, extranormally developed human personality. He possessed great spiritual powers; though he seldom made use of them to gain credence or to convince people of his greatness.

With the growth of a scientific and critical temper of mind, people began to doubt and question everything whose truth they could not establish and explain by reason or whose reality they could not demonstrate by experiment. The spiritual phenomena or miracles could not be ordered at will and subjected to experiment, because the conditions necessary for the production of such phenomena were not known. In fact they are not quite well known even now. Hence their reality was flatly denied and a belief in them was stigmatized as being due to mental hallucination. It was said, "The falsity of all miraculous pretension is proved by the fact that the supposed occurrences of the miracles has been confined to ages of ignorance and superstition, and that they are absolutely unknown in any time or place where science has provided witnesses fitted to appreciate and ascertain the nature of exhibitions of supernatural powers. History clearly demonstrates that, wherever ignorance and superstition have prevailed, every obscure occurrence has been attributed to supernatural agency, and it is freely acknowledged that under their influence, inexplicable and miraculous are convertible terms. On the other hand, in proportion as knowledge of natural laws has increased, the theory of supernatural interference with the order of nature has been displaced, and miracles have ceased. Ignorance and superstition created miracies, knowledge has for ever annihilated them."* So it has been said that the age of miracles is past.

* Summarised from the last Chapter of *Supernatural Religion* issued by the Rationalist Press Association, London.

From denouncing miracles the young enthusiastic devotees of the newly discovered scientific thought went on to deny the existence of God. The young free-thinkers of the Congress of Liege in 1865 could buoyantly declare, "Science does not deny God; she goes one better, she makes Him unnecessary." Natural sciences, which were yet in their unripe youth, went too far and too fast in their campaign of doubts and questionings. They came to regard matter to be the only reality, and experimental verification and rational intelligibility based on human experience and knowledge to be the only valid means of establishing the reality of any thing, fact, or phenomenon As mind, soul, or spirit could not be separated from the material body and made available for the test-tube method of proving their title to being regarded, as real entities, they also went to the rubbish heap. Man was regarded to be nothing but his body, without any past or future other than this life. The human body was considered to be a complex machine composed of blood, bones, muscles, nerves, etc. All his activity was declared to be a result of the physical and chemical changes going on in the body. Thought, which had been regarded as a function and proof of human mind or soul, was pronounced to be "a secretion of the brain just as bile was the secretion of the liver." The conscious life of man was but the mechanics of the brain "seen from the other side."†

But then came the limit. Science soon reached the end of its tether. Whereas in 1865 and thereabouts it considered God to be unnecessary, within a few decades it found God to be indispensable for a rational and scientific explanation of the diverse phenomena going on in the universe. All modern scientists of world-wide fame are turning towards God; for the old scientific objections to belief in God are no longer

* Quoted in *Nature, Man and God*, by William Temple, page 30.
† Dr. Hans Driesch's essay on "The Breakdown of Materialism" in *The Great Design*.

felt to be urgent. Matter and mind or soul have changed places in the conception of the scientists. Now matter is pronounced to be nothing and mind to be everything. The whole universe is declared to be more like a great thought than like a great machine.* The subject, though fascinating, is beyond the scope of this essay and must be left here.

Another set of eminent scientists of international repute are busy in Psychic research and are demonstrating the wonders of human personality The marvels of the soul have amazed the public and challenged the scrutiny of science. "It seems almost as though the exaggerated denial of materialism, scepticism, and rationalism had to be startled with as exaggerated an assertion from the other side. In any case, attention to the psychic has been re-aroused by the abnormal, extranormal, and supernormal phenomena, functions, and activities, of human personality. It began with mesmerism, a century or more ago, and every phase of the movement has been met, as is well known, by the most bitter hostility on the part of official science. In spite of denial and ridicule, however, the evidence as to so-called mesmeric phenomena accumulated by degrees, and a vast field of research was opened up, until, under the name of hypnotism, it has become part and parcel of accepted scientific investigation . Mesmerism has at the same time made us acquainted with a large number of extraordinary phenomena which were previously considered incredible, and has largely aided to build up a new science of psychiatry. Many of the beliefs and practices that dogmatic rationalism, and for the matter of that, the whole tendency of modern culture, has hoped to banish for good and all to the limbo of superstition, are back again; ... In many directions we may see, if we look for them, revivals of divination, seers and soothsayers and prophets, pythonesses, sibyls and prophetesses, tellers of dreams

* See supplement to this essay, *Science and God*.

and omens, mantics of every description and by every sort of contrivance ; astrologists and even alchemists ; professors of magical arts and ceremonies ; cosmologists, and revelationists ; necromancy and communion with spirits ; enthusiasm trance, and ecstasys..."*

Miracles in the sense of "the physical actions of an unseen intelligent agent producing results to which known laws are inadequate" have come within the range of experiment.† They have been shown to be real and true by the unimpeachable testimony of witnesses provided by science and "fitted to appreciate and ascertain the nature of such exhibitions" of the wonders of human personality. All these phenomena—the abnormal, extranormal, and supernormal functions and activities of human personality—may, under the present state of things, be divided into two categories. In the first place there are such of these phenomena as have been produced, studied, and demonstrated by eminent scientists under the strictest conditions of scientific experiment and observation. They are easier of production. The second class consists of those phenomena which, more wonderful than the rest, have been observed and investigated by reputed scientists of world-wide fame and witnessed by public men of honour and position, which have been testified and authenticated by the very best sort of evidence—the sort of evidence which would be readily accepted in a court of law, but which have not yet been produced and re-produced at will by other investigators.

It is impossible to give here any detailed account of these interesting phenomena. They can be only enumerated here

* G R.S. Mead's essay 'The Rising Psychic Tide' in *Spiritualism, Its Present Day Meaning*, edited by H. Carter, pages 37-38.

† "Science cannot now object to the occurrence of miraculous events, as we have seen, for such things were deemed impossible or forbidden only while science was passing through a transient phase interpreting nature in terms of a narrow theory that has now been superseded."

The Rev. C. W. O'Hara, S. J. Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy, in *Science and Religion*.

so as to serve as stimulus for further study to those who have the will, and as an aid to faith in the teachings of religion to those who might be disturbed by doubts and questionings. These phenomena may be classified and summed up as follows :—

1. Sounds—raps, taps, blows, and knocks—occurring in different places, in full light or darkness, but without any seen or known cause or agency. These sounds "vary in intensity from faint, gentle raps as may be produced with the end of knitting needle to blows which shake the room, and are as readily produced on a tumbler held in the hand of the experimenter, on the distant corners of the floor and ceiling, on a sheet of glass, on a stretched wire, on a tambourine, or in a living tree (Crookes), as on a chair or table. They will follow a code such as is used by telegraphists."*

2. Phenomena "which demonstrate the application of a distinct physical force to inanimate bodies without contact of any person. This class is particularly interesting, for it is actually a transference of energy by means at present entirely unknown. A pendulum enclosed in a glass case cemented to the wall can be set in motion,"† articles such us tables, chairs, books, etc. can be raised in the air and transported from one room to another, without contact of any person, a feather placed in one of the pans of a balance can more than counterbalance a heavy weight placed in the other.‡

* *Psychic Philosophy*, V. C. Desertis, pages 60-61.

† *Ibid*, page 61.

‡ While discussing the phenomena of motricity or movements of objects without contact, Dr Paul Joire says that it can be demonstrated that there exists a force capable of being projected from the human body and of setting objects in motion without contact. This can be done by means of an apparatus invented by him and called the "Sthenometer". He says that the force emanating from a person's body varies with different persons and with the state of health in the same person. In view of this all that we have to assume in order to admit the truth of what is said above is that some persons are endowed with this force in much higher degrees.

3. Levitation or rising—flying as it may also be called—of a person in the air while standing or sitting, apparently against the action of gravity. In certain cases. chairs may also be raised along with the sitters. The elevation may be from a few feet to the height of a room. Instances are reported where persons have been bodily transported from one street to another over and across several lofty buildings.*

4. Insensibility to heat. Red hot coal, glass, or metal may be handled with impurity. Persons may walk, to and fro, on beds of flaming embers. Dr Pascal has in the *Annales de Sciences Psychiques*, given an account of three occasions—October and December 1898 and February 1908—when, after the fire had been "controlled" by a Brahmin, at Benares, with his incantations and ceremonial, several persons of all ages and ranks with naked feet crossed and re-crossed a bed of live coals. On one occasion he and a Frenchman, the son of Dr. Javal of Paris, also walked on a bed of fire. At the end of the article he writes, "In our own days the mediums Eglinton, Home, and many others have been able to take live coals in their hands and hold them for some time without being burned. These phenomena are, therefore, not new. Those at which we were present are sufficient proof to us of the existence of a power capable of subduing to a considerable degree the destructive energy of fire. It was not extinguished but it did not burn. We consider that a furnace, similar to that which we have seen, could not be crossed with the naked feet, in the conditions stated, without serious burnings resulting each time."†

5. Writing, either through a planchet, or by a pencil laid on paper and left there, or on paper without any visible pencil. Automatic writing by some persons in languages and

* Vide *Invisible Friends* by Leadbeater.
† *Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena*, by Dr. Paul Joires, page 78.

about persons, places, and events, quite unknown to them, has also been recorded by several reputed investigators.

6. Visual phenomena or apparitions, usually seen in a faint light. Sometimes the appearances take the form of small luminous spheres from the size of a pea to that of a tennis ball, which float about in the room or round the heads of the sitters; or they may be pointed flames or pale luminous clouds, which may or may not develop into faces, hands, or even whole human figures. These figures can talk, shake hands, and embrace. They have also been photographed alone or seated by the side of the experimenter.

7. Chemical changes. The colour of water in sealed bottles has been recorded to have changed, unexposed photographic films carefully sealed have been impressed with various figures. Thought photography has been successfully attempted.

8 Apparent penetration of matter by matter. This class of phenomena is the most difficult to account for in the present state of knowledge. Rings sewn and sealed in cloth may be taken out without disturbing the cloth, stitches, or the seals, solid articles like flowers, harmoniums, flutes etc., may pass through closed doors or walls of a room, simple knots may be tied in an endless cord, steel wires may be magnetised or any article may be electrified by the simple contact of hand, the arm or back of a chair may be hung from a person's arm while his hand is securely tied and sealed with that of another and there is no other way for the chair to hang thus but by the passage of its arm or back through the person's arm, a person enclosed in an iron cage whose door and bars were securely sealed has been recorded to have come out of the cage without disturbing the seals. These phenomena might be taken to demonstrate the possibility of a disintegration and re-integration of material substances including human body.

9. Externalisation of sensibility. It is possible for a hypnotiser to suggest to his subjects that their sensibility has left them and has been transferred to another object—a glass of water, a board of wood, a piece of cloth, or their own shadow on the wall. Then the subjects will feel everything done to those objects and nothing done to their own bodies.

10. Luciduty, and clairvoyance, and clairaudience or the faculties of seeing and hearing things invisible and inaudible to humanity at large have been developed and demonstrated in numerous cases. It has been shown that it is possible for man to break the barriers of time and space and look into the past or future and across matter and distance. In fact, it can be said now that "modern, hard-hearted, sceptical science is suggesting that we possess a sixth sense that is free in time and space."*

11. Projection of the double. It has been recorded that some persons possess or can acquire the power of appearing in two different and distant places and being seen in both by all.

12. Thought transference and thought reading. These faculties have been proved beyond all manner of doubt to be perfectly human faculties capable of great development. Thoughts have been sent and caught across vast distances.

13. Healing and the mesmeric powers. A hypnotised person can be made to see, feel, and hear, exactly in accordance with the wishes of the hypnotiser. He may be made to drink without water and eat without food, enjoy from a pebble the fragrance of a rose, feel burnt by touching a piece of ice, feel his hands freezing in contact with a live coal, all under the suggestion of the hypnotiser. More. It has been possible to cure not only serious constitutional disorders of body in this way but also to heal permanently diseased limbs

* George Godwin, *Science Tests the Sixth Sense*, an article in the *Daily Sketch* dated August 7, 1935.

for which amputation had been declared to be the only course. Deep wounds have been produced and then made to disappear by mere suggestion.

14. Among the performances of a Faqir recorded by Loius Jacolliot, Chief Justice of Chandarnagar, we find that seeds which required some weeks to germinate were made, in an hour or so, to grow into plants above a foot in height.

15. Cases have been recorded where men have demonstrated their ability to arrest the movement of their hearts and arteries at will and die or expire at pleasure, and then revive when they so liked. This experiment has been performed in the presence of medical men who satisfied themselves by all sorts of tests that the person who had undertaken the demonstration had actually died and then come back to life. A Fakir, after he had stopped his breathing, was buried by General Ventura in the presence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and many of his Sirdars. He was disinterred after some months when he came back to life. Several Europeans were present at this performance.

One word more about these wonderful phenomena. There will seem much in what has been written above which may startle the reader and make him shake his head ; but he must remember that most of the phenomena summed up and classified above are not mere fabrications. "That they have occurred is matter for evidence in the strictly legal sense of the word; that they can be repeated with but few exceptions is matter for experiment in the strictly scientific sense of the word. None are to blame for scepticism",* but it must be remembered that a "presumptuous scepticism that rejects facts without examination of their truth is in some respects more injurious than unquestioning credulity."† If these phenomena appear to be "in opposition to known laws of Physics and Mechanics", it must be remembered that "Physics at the present day is in

*_Psychic Philosophy_, page 117.
†Humboldt quoted in _Psychic Philosophy_.

direct opposition to the Physics of a hundred years ago." * Who knows what it may be a hundred years hence. Those who will study these things for themselves will willingly concede that miracle in the sense of effects produced by the unseen intelligent forces is an experimental fact. But this miracle, be it noted, is not due to any supernatural intervention but the effect of an almost unknown force: it is not an invasion or evasion but a revelation of law. If miracles cannot be so readily produced at will as we would wish, the reason is that as yet the conditions governing the action of the forces producing them are but very imperfectly understood.

It now remains to mention few books by studying some of which the reader may convince himself of the truth of all that has been said above. So here they are:—

1. *Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena* by Dr. Paul Joire.
2. *Psychic Philosophy*, by V. C. Desertis.
3. *The Reality of Psychic Phenomena*, by Dr. W. J. Crawford.
4. *An Experiment with Time*, by J. W. Dunne.
5. *Report on Spiritualism*. London Dialectical Society.
6. *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, by A R. Wallace.
7. *Incidents in my Life*, by D. D. Home.
8. *The Night Side of Nature*, by Mrs. Crowe.
9. *The Occult Arts*, by J. W. Frings.
10. *The Life Everlasting and Psychic Evolution*, by J. W. Frings.
11. *Researches in Spiritualism*, by Sir W. Crookes.
12. *The Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* F. W. H. Myres.
13. *Occult Science in India*, by Louis Jacolliot.
14. *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, by Sir William F. Barret.
15. *Psychic Facts—a Summary of Scientific Evidence*, by W. H. Harrison.
16. *Transcendental Physics*, by Prof. Zollner.

Numerous books have been written and are being written on this topic which is engaging more and more the attention of the educated public specially in the West.

* *Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena*, Dr. P. Joire, page 414.

2. Science and God

Since the advent of the scientific thought there has grown up a strong antagonism between Science and Religion. Science not only denied God but also made Him unnecessary; for it believed that it could rationally explain the universe and its phenomena without supposing God much better than could religion explain them with the help of its God. But when the early enthusiasm was over and sobriety returned, with maturer experience, the old cocksureness was gone. Science found that even for a rational and scientific explanation of the universe and its phenomena God is absolutely indispensable. It is not possible to trace here the gradual breakdown of Materialism ; but as it has become a fashion in this country to take all ideas from the West and to scoff at all that has not obtained the blessings of the Western thinkers, and as a wave of irreligion and Atheism is springing up in our country in imitation of what used to be the current habit of thought in the West, we shall quote here opinions of some of the leading scientists of the world. Perhaps our growing generation may learn from them to give a little more thought to things of the Spiritual world.

Albert Einstein

" I believe in God, the God of Spinoza ; who reveals Himself in the orderly harmony of the universe, I believe that intelligence is manifested throughout all nature. "

Sir Arthur Eddington

" Materialism and Determinism, those household gods of nineteenth century science, which believed that this world could be explained in mechanical and biological concepts as a well-run machine, must be discarded by modern science, to make room for a spiritual conception of the universe and man's place in it. The old Atheism is gone. Mind is the first and most direct thing in our experience ; all else is merely remote inference ; Religion belongs to the realm of spirit and mind, and cannot be shaken. "

J. S. Haldane

" The material world, which has been taken for a world of blind mechanism, is in reality a spiritual world seen very partially and imper-

fectly. The only real world is the spiritual world......The truth is that not matter, not force, not any physical thing, but mind, personality, is the central fact of the universe."

Kirtley F. Mather

"For several decades the results of scientific investigation appeared to be leading directly towards a mechanic explanation of the nature of cosmic energy. All that has changed in the last few years. We now know that the latest of the analysis of material objects, when we penetrate as far as we may into the secret of the nature of things, gives no wholly different impression from that which our fathers had a generation ago......The nearest approach we have thus far made to the ultimate in our analysis of matter and of energy indicates that the universal reality is mind. Matter becomes simply an expression of mind. This represents my belief about God. It leads naturally to a statement about personality. For me God is everything in the universe which tends to produce a fine personality in a human being."

Arthur H. Crampton

"The old fashioned evolutionary attitude was that the world as we know it developed as a result of chance, variations of all kinds occurring, some of which would be more suited to the conditions than others, and therefore surviving. More recent thought has found this viewpoint increasingly difficult to defend.

"To the Physicist it has become clear that the chances are infinitesimal that a universe filled with atoms having random properties would develop into a world with the infinite variety that we find about us. This strongly suggests that the evolutionary processs is not a chance one, but is directed toward some definite end. If we suggest that evolution is directed, we imply that there is an intelligence directing it."

Robert A. Millikan

"God is the unifying principle of the universe. No more sublime conception of God has ever been presented to the mind of man than that which is furnished by Evolution when it represents Himself through countless ages in the development of the earth as an abode for man, and in the age-long inbreathing of life into constituent matter, culminating in man with his spiritual nature and all his God-like powers."

Sir James Jeane

"Today there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading toward a non-mechanical universe ; the universe begins

to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter ; we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter......The universe can be best pictured, although still very imperfectly, and inadequately, as consisting of pure thought, the thought of what, for want of a wider word, we must describe as a mathematical thinker. If the universe is a universe of thought, its creation must have been an act of thought. Time and space must have come into being as part of this act. Modern scientific theory compels us to think of the creator as outside time and space, which are part of his creation, just as the artist is outside his canvas. In watching the metamorphosis of the old picture of nature or the universe into the new picture which science to-day is giving us, we do not see the addition of mind to matter so much as the complete disappearance of matter. Nothing in matter survives. The background of universe, the reality, is mind."

In addition to the views of the above mentioned scientists we may notice here the views of fourteen other equally eminent scientists of world-wide reputation who in their essays in *The Great Design* give their various answers to the following questions :—

" Is the World a Soulless Mechanism ? Is it a work of blind chance ? Is Materialism true ? Is the universe, as Huxley asked, 'a mud pie made by two blind children, Matter and Force' ?" To quote the words of the publishers printed on the wrapper :—" Many thinking men and women fail to realise that modern science does not sanction such a view. In this volume 14 men of international eminence, each in his own branch of science, show that the ordered harmony, the mathematical precision, the great design of the whole, point, with ever increasing force, to a Purposing and Directing Mind at the back of the great drama of creation ; that *the discoveries of science strengthen, not weaken, belief in an infinite Creator.*" The book shows by facts that in Nature's works we can see indications of Order and Intelligence, the work of Mind—indications, as Spinoza said, that " The Universe is but the reflected thought of God".

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Printed by L. Ram Lal Puri, at the University Tutorial Press, Lal Chand Street, Anakali Lahore, and published by Messrs. Jaidev Singh, Jogindar Singh Booksellers, Amritsar.